00080454

ASIATIC SOCIETY MUMBAI

This book has been adopted
for conservation
by
Hermès India

A project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay

00080454

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay
on 12 April, 2019

FIVE GREAT PAINTERS

ESSAYS REPRINTED FROM

THE EDINBURGH AND QUARTERLY REVIEWS

BY

LADY EASTLAKE

2248

E0454

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

R e 27

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1883

All rights reserved

759.504
Las/Fin

LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET · SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

PAGE

TITIAN. (PART II.) 1

Edinburgh Review. January 1878.

RAPHAEL 89

Edinburgh Review. January 1883.

ALBERT DÜRER 187

Quarterly Review. October 1879.

TITIAN

PART II.

TITIAN.

PART II.

THE life and career of Titian were essentially that of a painter only. He was not tempted from his path by other gifts of genius, like the universal and fastidious Leonardo da Vinci; nor was he tortured and thwarted in it by ignorance and tyranny, like the noble and unhappy Michael Angelo. Rather do we perceive in the complete working out of his powers from youth to extreme old age, the unmistakable reflex of a Republic under which its subjects traded, wrote, and painted with a freedom then unknown elsewhere. Venice, it is true, was no Arcadia from which envy, hatred, and malice were banished; nevertheless, it is to a greater liberty and justice of government that we must ascribe the comparative absence of that

'*odium pittoricum*' which stains the annals of other centres of Italian art. Pictures of priceless worth perished in Venice by fire, and outside frescoes by the corrosion of the salt-laden air; but no record has been left of the destruction of great works, or of the personal injury to great painters by the evil passions of rival masters. Titian had his share of the trials, and faults too, inherent in an age of baseness and insincerity, but these did not obstruct the course of his work. It may be truly said that the power of Painting, as such, could no further go, than it was carried by his pencil. He discovered all her secrets, commanded all her resources, conquered all her difficulties, and practised all her subjects. His fame is almost unique of its class; for he was not only the most fashionable painter of his own day, and has remained the most popular of succeeding times, but he may also be pronounced *par excellence* the painter's painter for all times. And if, in spite of this sweeping panegyric, certain qualities, such as the highest spiritu-

ality of expression and refinement of form, are absent from his canvas, it is because they were incompatible with other qualities more proper to himself, in which he was unsurpassable.

The compilers of Titian's Life[1] have not been able to render much service to their subject by their historical discoveries. A painter's life, like a woman's, does not gain by being eventful. The less said of him out of his studio the better, and such incidents as his biographers have elicited are apt to be misconstrued. Titian's name is associated with that of Emperors and Princes; but the fact that this connexion is marked by few generous deeds on the one part, and by few noble motives on the other, is more his misfortune than his fault. The old Italian writers who treat of Titian dwell on the friendship of such men as Charles V. and Philip II. as the highest glory of his life. The present biographers prove in a business-

[1] *Titian: His Life and Times.* By J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle. 2 vols.

like way how frequently they cheated him. If, too, they show that Titian was no mean match for royal patrons who forgot to pay, they make it clear at the same time that his protest against these 'bad debts' was at all events conducted with more manly openness than was then customary. Instead, therefore, of charging this to the score of greed and avarice on the part of the great painter, we see only a proceeding natural to a Venetian citizen accustomed to the language of business and trade. His own government were sharp and cautious, but they paid for what they ordered, and gave what they promised. In the spirit of the age, monopolies, sinecures, and such side-wind gains, took the place of more regular contracts. As soon, for instance, as Titian began to take rank as a painter, he kept his eye on a certain '*Sanseria*,' or 'Broker's Patent,' held by Giovanni Bellini from the Signory, worth 100 ducats a year, with exemption from taxes to the amount of twenty more. This, with certain conditions of painting-work attached, he ultimately

obtained, and except when absent from the State, or once, when displaced by an intrigue of Pordenone, he enjoyed it for life. But the patents and pensions awarded him by the friendship of Sovereigns had a very different result. The retrospect of these favours accorded to Titian, always for hard service done, presents something ludicrous now, though no laughing matter then. There was a pension on the Milan Treasury from Charles V., who even had the generosity to double it; a privilege from the same for the carriage of grain, on the Treasury at Naples; a '*Naturalezza*' for his son in Spain from Philip II.; a right of cutting timber from a forest in the Tyrol belonging to the King of Bohemia; and Church benefices from the Duke of Mantua, and others. But the united returns from all these sources were as slender as precarious, and only obtained at all by bribes and fees, which further curtailed them. Sometimes the painter received an instalment in the form of an inconvenient commodity, such as rice. One benefice, which

failed to pay, entailed only the gain of a loss, being saddled with an annuitant who vexed his soul with dunning letters. Further, some of his noble patrons tempted him with the bait of benefices not theirs to bestow; while Clement VII. outdid all by promising him the 'Piombo,' or sealing of the Papal Bulls, a handsome sinecure, which he had already bestowed on Sebastiano Luciano. Under all these vicissitudes Titian's letters of remonstrance to 'Cæsar,' and other potentates, though couched in the insincere phraseology of the day, show no crouching spirit. He wrote to Charles V. in terms of singular boldness, stating the unprofitable nature of His Catholic Majesty's numerous gifts, and hoping 'that the liberal mind of the greatest Emperor that ever lived will not suffer his orders to be contemned by his ministers.' At the same time he fortified his appeal by the gift of a picture of the 'Madonna Addolorata,' still in the Madrid Gallery, 'the sorrowing expression of whose countenance will,' he hopes, by a rather profane application,

'convey to your Majesty the quality of my troubles.'

To Philip II. he is still more explicit. 'The letters' (or literally the paper money) 'with which I am favoured by your Majesty in respect of the payments due to me in Genoa, have had no effect. Whence it appears that one who is able to conquer the proudest and most powerful of enemies with his marvellous valour is so little obeyed by his ministers as that I can ever hope to obtain the moneys assigned to me by your Grace. . . . I therefore humbly beg that your Majesty will conquer the obstinate insolence of these persons, by ordering that I be at once paid.' At the expiration of another fruitless year Titian renews his entreaties, and again, as with Charles V., he bespeaks spiritual intercession. This time it came in the shape of a picture of the Magdalen, 'who appears before you with tears, and as a suppliant in favour of your most devoted servant.'

In this way Titian was always sending good pictures after bad money. It appears

that between the years 1556 and 1567 he had expedited fourteen pictures to Philip, as reminders of moneys due; some of them, such as the 'Venus and Adonis,' 'Diana and Calisto,' 'Diana and Actæon,' and the 'Martyrdom of St. Laurence,' being glorious specimens of his art. In summing these up in a letter to Philip's secretary, he adds that these fourteen had been sent 'with many others which I do not remember,' for all of which he never received a '*quattrino.*' It is true that Titian lost nothing for lack of asking, and would even feign to be poorer than he was, the better to urge his claims. But the labourer, in those times, could ill afford to be very scrupulous in pleading for his hire—even had that labour not been such as to cast lustre on the thrones for which it was executed, and the lands which have inherited it.

As to the stories of his jealousy of other painters—even of his mere journeyman assistant, his brother, Francesco Vecelli—these are easily cast aside when we know how fair and generous he was to artists who might be

called rivals. He reminded the people at Brescia, who wanted portraits by his hand, that they had a great portrait painter of their own, by name Moretto. He refused a commission from the Chapter at Parma, saying they could employ no better man than Correggio. From Augsburg he sends his compliments to Lorenzo Lotto, wishing that so good a painter and judge, invaluable as a critic, were with him—and when, for a picture of Philip, a design by Coello was sent him, he wrote back that with so clever a painter in Spain, His Majesty need never send for pictures from a foreign land.

To turn, however, to his own art and life. No great painter so clearly tells the place of his own birth as Titian. The landscape of Cadore; its dolomites, torrents, distant mountains, and even its castle, and the very chestnut trees in the village called 'Sotto Castello,' are repeated in his backgrounds. Titian, or, more properly, Tiziano Vecelli, was born at Pieve, in the province of Cadore, in 1477; a few months after Giorgione, and a year or

two before Palma Vecchio. His biography is no exception to those of most great Italian painters, which, in point of legendary stories, rival the Roman Calendar itself. In times when no one thought of visiting localities or searching documents, biographers could indite pretty much what they pleased. It mattered little whether a picture was painted to corroborate a fable, or a fable written to identify a picture. Italian writers evidently felt that Titian's genius as a man required him, poetically speaking, to have been a prodigy in his childhood. In confirmation of this a pretty tale is told, dating from the seventeenth century, by a cousin of the master thrice removed,[1] who relates that such was the child's instinct for art, that, with colours extracted by himself from the juice of flowers, he painted a Madonna on the wall of the house in which he lived, which was the admiration and wonder of all who beheld it. Whether the story led to the picture, or *vice versâ*, matters not. Like as with a picture of

[1] Tizianello.

the Virgin Mary, covered with Eastern inscriptions, for which she had sat to St. Luke —which had been walled up for eighteen centuries in a well at Jerusalem, and then turned out to be of the school of Correggio— this picture, by the boy Titian, which still exists on the inner wall of the house next that believed to have been his father's, is pronounced by the laconic verdict of Sir Charles Eastlake to be 'an ordinary wall painting of later date by an unskilful hand.'[1]

The further tradition that Titian derived the first rudiments of art from a Friulian master—the pedigree of that master, one Antonio Rosso, being minutely made out by local antiquaries till it touches the required period—has as little foundation. According to all trustworthy evidence the boy was taken to Venice at nine or ten years of age to learn a trade; and that in such a workshop he should be led to prefer the trade of a painter needs no explanation. But there Venetian history leaves him, as it does many others.

[1] *Handbook of Italian Painting*, vol. ii., p. 533, *note*.

Two masters, by that time in Venice, were especially capable of rearing the robust seedling into flower; namely, the brothers Gentile and Giovanni Bellini; both elderly, and both having adopted the use of the oil medium, first introduced into Venice by Antonello da Messina in 1473. This frontier period, where the refinements of the tempera method passed over into the facilities of oil, was perhaps the most favourable that ever occurred for the development of young artists. There is the less need, therefore, to unravel the further fables concerning Titian's art education; which assign his teaching first to Gentile Bellini, and then to Giovanni, with puerile reasons why the one quarrelled with him and he with the other, and then place him in partnership with Giorgione. That he derived teaching from both the great brothers, and especially from Giovanni, is not to be doubted. The present biographers have not been able to extend our knowledge as to Titian's early works, nor as to the positive date of the greater part of his pictures. There was

much to be done in painting furniture and '*cassoni*,' which probably gave occupation to the youthful hand, but has transmitted no clue to it. A fresco of the figure of Hercules on the Morosini Palace, long obliterated, is reported by Sansovino to have been the work of Titian. In truth, that demand for portable indoors pictures, which had long prevailed among the noble and wealthy in other parts of Italy, and was destined to be developed by our master and his contemporaries, had hardly commenced in Venice. The biographers, who have collected a world of reference, with which these heavy, ill-arranged, queerly expressed, and unpicturesque volumes teem to a most creditable and incredible extent, can fix on no other example of his first efforts than the small Madonna to which his name is attached in the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna. The comparison between this timid, but sympathetic work, and the splendid 'Holy Family' with the Child giving cherries to the Madonna, in the same gallery, shows a space of development between the two

only observable in the greatest masters. One slight clue to the chronology of his pictures, which has escaped the biographers, has been observed by a connoisseur, viz.: that in his earlier works the principal colours are the gayest a painter can use—red and green; in his later works, orange and blue. Thus the 'St. Mark Enthroned,' in the 'Salute' at Venice, painted in 1513, has a predominance of the red and green. The 'Assumption' in the Belle Arti, 1518, preserves in great measure the same; while the 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' adjudged to 1523, but possibly later, and the Pesaro altar-piece in the Frari, finished in 1526, both abound with the finest treatment of blue and yellow.

The first positive record of Titian's hand are his fresco labours under Giorgione on the 'Fondaco dei Tedeschi,' close to the Rialto. This building had been destroyed by fire in 1505. Funds from the Salt Revenue, which paid for all outlays for architecture and decoration in the Venetian public buildings, were assigned to replace it on a larger scale.

By May 1507, the new 'Fondaco' was ready for roofing, and between that time and November 1508, when Giorgione's frescoes were valued, Titian and he laboured in their suspended stagings before the newly finished walls. One luminous spot, like the glow of a sunset, is now the sole remaining evidence of the original splendour. No fresco operations can permanently stand the influence, not of the damp, for Venice is singularly dry, but of her salt-laden atmosphere. Up to the middle of the seventeenth century, however, these frescoes in great measure survived, for a print, dated 1658, gives the complete form of the 'Judith' by Titian; but a century later, in 1755, the few fragments which Zanetti engraved were all that remained. Giorgione and Titian were then each about thirty years of age, and the portions of female nude forms, of exquisite grace and roundness, which Zanetti has preserved, with the traditions of the radiant depth of the colouring, suffice to show the greatness each master had

then attained. This was a '*maniera nuova*' —however different from that of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Cena,' to which the term was first applied by Vasari; and that same writer, never cordially just to Venetian merit, affected to be scandalised with compositions which illustrated no story that he could decipher. At the same time he confuses one painter with the other, and is thus the first of a line of critics who have found it difficult to distinguish between them.

Of the relations between Giorgione and Titian, then in the pride of manhood, there is also no lack of legend. Titian is represented as a youth of twenty, when thus employed on the 'Fondaco,' where he showed a superiority which the other never forgave. The truth, which is carefully elicited by Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, his biographers, is as follows. Giorgione was the painter engaged by the Signory, and the fact that he shared the commission with Titian, who was then his assistant, shows his estimate of powers

not so publicly acknowledged as his own. That Giorgione had justly acquired his title to fame is more than sufficiently proved by his Castelfranco picture, executed before 1504, while as regards his Venetian repute, he appears to have owed it to various frescoes executed on palace walls, as commemorated by contemporaries. But, like Leonardo da Vinci a few years before, he is reported to have played experiments with his grounds and mediums—those who had once tasted the fascination of oil being loth to forego it—so that Vasari, who visited Venice in 1544, found those frescoes already decaying. We may infer, therefore, that the works on the 'Fondaco' profited by his experience, having lasted longer. At all events, it seems that Giorgione maintained a priority of fame, for Titian received no commission from the Signory till after the death of this master—1511.

The confusion which the history of art shows to have prevailed between the works

of Titian and Giorgione warrants the attempt to define something of the diversities of their gifts. This can only be done by admitting that master, Giovanni Bellini—to whom each doubtless owed the same amount of teaching or influence—as a stand-point between them. And here there is no question as to which scholar most openly wore his colours. Giorgione, as far as he goes, is much more the continuer of Bellini than Titian is. With more than fifty years between them—Giorgione dying at thirty-four when Bellini was eighty-five—the feeling for a particular class of landscape and disposition of drapery, however further carried by the younger, is the same in both. The art of Giovanni Bellini may be said to exhibit the noblest form attainable under the so-called trammels of the fifteenth century; if not, upon the whole, the noblest form attained at any time. By him these 'rich bounties of constraint' were never thrown off, though relaxed in his later years to the utmost extent compatible with the expression of spiritual simplicity. In Giorgione

the traces of these same Paduan fetters, which Bellini wore with such ineffable grace, are still seen in a certain classicality of form and drapery. In Titian they vanish altogether. We have said of Giorgione, 'as far as he goes,' for it must be remembered that of the crowd of works that have passed under his name, there is but one which can be *proved* to be by him, namely, the just-mentioned altar-piece at his birthplace—Castelfranco. Comparing this with the grand altar-piece by Giovanni Bellini in S. Zaccaria at Venice, a certain similarity in arrangement, in intense depth of effect, as well as in equality of excellence, is detected, which suggests the belief that the one picture had been seen by the painter of the other. So equal is the result in the highest qualities of art that the more than half-century between the two painters is obliterated. The youthful fire of Giorgione, curbed under the restrictions of a religious subject, and the calm wisdom of Bellini, working within the largest exercise of such limits, here appear to join hands. But the logic of dates in-

terposes, and requires a reversal of the usual sequence of comparison. For the Castelfranco picture, executed before 1504, precedes that of S. Zaccaria, executed 1505; so that such influence of example as appears to have been subtilely transmitted must have proceeded from the younger to the elder, and not *vice versâ*. Other evidence also shows that the wonderful old man, who had time and strength for two lives, physical and pictorial—one in Padua, the other in Venice—one in tempera, the other in oil—refreshed his own art at this time at the very fountain he had himself assisted to open. Exactly at what period the meridian line of North Italian art was crossed, it would be rash to pronounce, but one can but feel that the splendour of Titian and his school was illumined by a westering sun, and that in the two works above mentioned the nearest approach to the apogee is attained.

In comparing, secondly, Giorgione with Titian, it must be taken into account that the ground in any way common to both is far

narrower than is usually supposed. Much of the confusion between the two has existed not between their respective authentic works, but between Titian and works attributed to Giorgione, and even in many cases the later productions of Titian's own pupils and followers. The standards by which the two can be compared are as much narrowed in works as in time, terminating as they do with Giorgione's premature death. His early labours in the form of fresco, though they go far to account for the immense imitation of him, have, as we have seen, long perished. Besides the Castelfranco picture Giorgione is chiefly known and judged by a few exquisite small works—the 'Judgment of Solomon' and 'Choice of Moses,' both in the Uffizi; the 'Astrologers' in the Belvedere; 'Giorgione's Family,' so-called, once in the Manfrin Palace; and the 'Adoration of the Shepherds,' belonging to Mr. Somerset Beaumont. Setting aside the fact that Titian has left no pictures of this class, these above mentioned, which are, it is true, Giorgione's only by tradition and internal

evidence, are so distinct from Titian's manner that no one could mistake them for his. In point of execution we may venture to say they show more contrast and less gradation, more force and less fusion, more heat on the surface and less below it; while in point of character they are less dramatic and more profound, less Italian and more original, and even outlandish; indeed, in the sense attached to Titian's works, Giorgione is not even markedly Venetian. It is in these smaller specimens, accepted as by Giorgione, that we see how greatly he inclined to a class of aristocratic and graceful *genre*. When this treatment can be compared as in Giorgione's 'Concert' in the Pitti, with Titian's so-called 'Music Party' in the National Gallery, the superiority of Giorgione is so manifest that we the more cordially endorse Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle's verdict that the 'Music Party' is by an inferior imitator. The Pitti picture is one that stands alone—the climax of the highest realistic and portrait power. No grander or more individual head is seen in

art than that of the Augustine monk, seated at the harpsichord, who, turning towards the bystander, sufficiently expresses the question, 'Are you ready?' We hear the query even without the help of the high-bred, wiry hands which strike the keys, and tenaciously hold a chord which seems to vibrate for ever. Master as he was of portraiture, Titian could as little have painted the reality of the 'Concert' as Giorgione could have conceived the poetry of the 'Bacchus and Ariadne.'

And, thirdly, it is not difficult to say in what respect both pupils agreed with each other in differing from the master—a difference of the most sweeping nature, for it is nothing less than that between the spiritual and the worldly. Perfectly as the aged Bellini mastered the riper secrets of art, his spiritual feeling was never sacrificed to them. Giorgione and Titian, it is true, preserved all that decorum of religious representation which Correggio so enchantingly sported away. Giorgione's two male saints at Castelfranco,

by which alone he can be judged, are grave and dignified, and Titian's numerous saints, male and female, are the same; but they are only so in the sense that first-rate actors in such scenes were bound to be. Bellini's saints are realities.

Especially do the two younger masters illustrate the point of departure from the elder one in the relation of the Madonna to the Child. With Bellini, the Child is always more or less solemn—in his earlier works sometimes almost grotesquely so—and the Madonna, his no less solemn worshipper. She either, with reverential hands, presents him straight upright to the gaze of the world he is about to redeem—or gives him the fatal apple, which brought the Fall—or supports him while he bends forward to bless the kneeling donor. But no tenderer personal feeling is perceptible through the hush of her adoration. She is ever the meek Handmaid of the Lord, and he, though 'veiled in clouds of infant flesh,' the long-expected Messiah. All this reverence vanishes with Giorgione

and Titian. Their Madonna is no longer awed by the lovely Babe that lies in natural infantine action upon her knees; she loves him far too well! With some pretty feint of playful action she seeks to unite the Child in momentary interest with the saints attendant; or to amuse him with bird, flower, fruit, or even rabbit. But the feeling of the Virgin is seldom more than that of young and serene maternity, and the expression of the Child that of the royalty of babyhood. The same difference distinguishes Bellini's angels from those by Titian—we remember none by Giorgione. Bellini's, with all their naïve, infantine grace, are more and other than mere earthly children with wings. Titian's milk-fed cherubs—who make a sunshine in a shady place as they go through the farce of holding up cross or crown over the martyr or worshipper below—are nothing else. Each in their turn are the triumphs of art, but Bellini's angels are the right creatures in the right place. Is it too much to aver that the taste for Bellini, which has arisen in these

later times, is a proof of a spiritual capacity in our generation to which our forefathers were strangers? With all his knowledge and fine taste, Sir Joshua, in his Italian travels, never notices a Bellini; and with all their unscrupulous cupidity the French never stole one.

Till the latter years of better connoisseurship the names of a few great masters have been freely applied to their followers. One name has represented a class, and none has been more freely used in this respect than Titian's. When the Italian Parliament began to discuss questions concerning the national pictures, a well-known Deputy and connoisseur called attention to the fact that though no less than six Titians were to be found in the catalogue of the Turin Gallery, there was not one in the gallery itself. Two of the six thus ascribed were not even Venetian, but by a master so singularly subjective in character as, once known, never to be mistaken; namely, by Girolamo Savoldo, the great Brescian painter.

In no respect is the immense research which has compiled the Life before us more evident than in the list of 'uncertified Titians,' amounting to about 250, than which it would be difficult to find a more curious assemblage of random shots. Nor indeed, we may add, is this research less evident in the fact, stated in the preface, that, of above one thousand pictures, to which the great name has been attached, in Italy, England, and elsewhere, the biographers have personally studied nearly all. How really to distinguish Titian from the numerous good Venetian painters of his time is a question only answered by an experienced eye. For pictures are like brothers and sisters; however strong the family likeness between them, it vanishes when each member becomes well known; it is soon found therefore that Palma, Tintoret, and Bonifazio are really as distinct from Titian as from each other. There are works by Titian, such as his 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' and his tragically and probably treacherously destroyed 'Peter Martyr,' which stand alone

as his. But, for purposes of comparison, we must take him in the range of subjects more common to the school. Here he may be distinguished not so exclusively by his colour, his drapery, or his modes of composition, though individual in each, as by the quality he understood to give to his surface. No one more effectually attained that concealment of his means which is the aim of every true painter. His work shows no paint; what is technically called 'the palette' is imperceptible. He perceived that, in Nature, *texture* lies beneath colour, and that the one must be obtained in order to command the other. He observed that Nature expresses her differences not only by contrasts of black and white, red and green, or blue and yellow, but by appositions of the transparent and the opaque, the hard and the soft, the rough and the smooth, and the dull and the sparkling; each relieving and making prominent the other. For 'things, save by their opposites, appear not.' The colours he used are known to have been few and common; it was the

infinite changes he rang upon them, the varieties of surface he extracted from them, which produced his subtle and mysterious gradations. No one studied the chemistry of effect as he did: the superposition of one tint upon another; the blood beneath the skin, the light within the shade, the colour in the depths. No one so far carried the power which gives to the result of skill the appearance of happy accident. Titian's pictures seen in an early stage were described by a contemporary as 'gemmed all over' with solid touches and masses of paint, destined to be masked and united by an overgrowth of the subtlest operations of brush and finger. Palma Giovane, who was for years in Titian's school, has described how canvases in this state would be placed aside for months; that the master would then lift them up, and examine them with a sternness of expression 'as if they were his mortal enemies,' and then set to work like one possessed. Nothing can be truer to life than this description. A painter staring into his first sketch is like

a seer looking into futurity—dimly seeing what is to be. Palma Giovane adds that the master kept many pictures going at a time, turning from one to the other; laying on colour, or blending tints, with a rub of his finger; and in the last operations working far more with his fingers than with his brush. Artists and connoisseurs have in vain interrogated the pictures themselves as to the method that produced them. It is told of a Bergamasque painter that in the endeavour to discover the secret of the transparency and luminousness of the blood tints, he scraped a fine head to the canvas, and in vain. He might as well have pulled a flower to pieces to know how it grew, Had he asked Titian himself, we may be sure the painter could not have told him. Feeling gropes its way to what it seeks, but has no precise rules for the route: where these begin, Nature leaves off, and mechanical mannerism takes her place. It was this pure feeling which taught him not only what to do, but when to have done. Titian touched and retouched, glazed

and scumbled, veil over veil, and film over film—but from no false fastidiousness; rather undoing in the end than overdoing the effect of finish.

Titian is usually called a great Realist; we should rather style him a great Naturalist. Realism, in its technical sense, as opposed to a poetical conception of Nature, and to the antique, was certainly not his tendency. His reported caricature of the 'Laocoon' under the figures of three apes, was doubtless in derision of some classical pedant. But though he broke entirely with the statuesque influence of the Paduan school, which had extended to the Muranese painters, yet that was no proof of any want of respect for the antique. A statuesque conception of a figure in painting is rather the imitation of the manner or letter of Greek art than of its spirit. It required nothing less than the genius of Mantegna to adhere closely to classic forms, and yet to subdue them with stupendous power to his own individuality. Even had Titian not been familiar with the

antique in the studio of Gentile Bellini, known to have been stored with fine specimens, who, in the Italy of that period, could have escaped its influence? The air was full of it. Instead, therefore, of taxing Titian with ignorance, and urging him, as Vasari and others did, to go to Rome and study antique sculpture, there is no painter who can be said to have given its spirit a juster place in the sister art. Of all painters that ever lived, Titian is the truest representative of the old Greek sculptor, as inspired and fed by the principles of Nature, but with no compromise of his own art. Far from borrowing any of the forms of the antique, no master, excepting always Michael Angelo, has been so entirely independent of them. Titian's draperies are full of light and motion, but never even what is called 'historic.' He reasoned as soundly as a painter upon the appearances of Nature, as the Greeks did as sculptors; each jealously expressing their worship of the great Goddess in their own language. Nor was any change of style possible either with him or with them

from first to last, since both drew inspiration from the Immutable.

How far the combination of plastic and pictorial effects in one form is possible, no great master has attempted to solve. The late Ary Scheffer once observed that an equal balance of art qualities was only to be expected in mediocrity, and quoted Philip de Champagne as an example. In true genius, as in grand natures, one overweening power invariably exists at the expense of some minor one. They must have '*les défauts de leurs qualités*;' and it is this predominance of excellence in one direction that gives character, individuality, and charm. It is more than problematical whether the 'Magdalen' by Mantegna in the National Gallery would gain by being coloured like the 'Ariadne' by Titian. Garofalo, Ferrarese by nature, and Roman by education, comes closest in his art to the union of classic form with modern colour, and in this may be found the clue to the comparatively little interest his works inspire. We lack the faculty of enjoying two ex-

cellences at once; or rather the mixture of two languages debases both.

Let us now turn to some of the varieties of Titian's subjects and modes of treatment. And here again he appears as the true type of the old Hellenic feeling; turning his brush, it is true, to every subject required of it, but finding real liberty only in the deification of that human life which was the highest good of the Greek. To quote an eloquent passage, 'The Greeks defined the hopes of mere mortals to consist in the enjoyment of Nature; they defined them consistently, accurately, perfectly, as addressed to the senses and the imagination. They defined too the feelings of the natural man to whom their art was addressed—his pride, his dignity, his courage, his love, his taste. But the feelings that the advent of Christianity was destined to develop—his soul-felt trust, his peace, his faith, his humility, his contrition—these they could not address, because they knew them not.' We must not say that Titian knew them not, but in truth the inmost secret of his art was

Pagan. Under his hand human creatures are grand, calm, satisfied, and benign, but the true conception of beings devoted to a religion not of this world was foreign to him. The pride of life in which his brush was, so to say, steeped, interdicted, for instance, the remotest realisation of that Divine countenance which has been the crucial test of art. The 'Tribute Money' in the Dresden Gallery is known to be one of his earlier works, and the biographers trace in it already all his mysterious manipulation. But the expression cannot fail to disappoint. Aiming at something foreign to his feeling, the head of the Saviour, instead of being even grand and dignified, is cold and expressionless, with an individuality which betrays the model. What heart also was ever touched by his weeping 'Magdalen'?—the most popular picture, he says in a letter, he ever painted—or edified by his 'John the Baptist'? the latter especially a triumph of execution.

Again, the 'Entombment' in the Louvre is a picture of such overpowering force and

grandeur that criticism stands abashed before it. But the pathos resides more in the solemn twilight tones and masses than in the figures engaged. The actions of the mourners are all that is natural, the respect of the bearers all that is decorous, though they carry their sacred burden in a grave-cloth not even tightened by its weight. Spirituality of expression is hardly missed in the perfection of the imitation; still, it is but a scene acted with faultless propriety, and, in Goethe's words, 'we perceive the motive, and remain unmoved.'

It was different with the great altar-pieces, such as the Pesaro picture in the Frari at Venice—one of those curious medleys of family portraits and legendary personages which raised so many sumptuous pictorial structures. Such a subject was a convention from beginning to end—the anomaly of all unities—an artificial world, and therefore one in which the great hand could revel without danger of offending scruples or disappointing standards. Here, accordingly, the master is seen lavishing his powers with exquisite taste

on forms of beauty, pomp, and of the pride that apes humility;—reconciling imagination and reality with such skill that the consent of the spectator is won as to a possible and actual scene.

Not so amenable to treatment were other subjects in the ecclesiastical repertory, though equally tamed by his genius. Few incidents, when stripped of their legendary prestige, can be conceived less favourable to art than that which goes under the name of the 'Assumption of the Virgin.' A large woman, ascending through the air, with twelve men below her, all expressing the same commonplaces of astonishment, most of them with their arms tossed aloft, and turning their backs to the spectator. The Roman Church did its best to destroy, by flame and smoke, Titian's *chef d'œuvre* of this subject, and thus unintentionally saved it from the grasp of the French, who never suspected that under this blackened and partially charred surface lay one of the finest monuments of difficulties overcome. Three distinct groups are here—

a condition, in most hands, fatal to a composition, but the eye rests only on the one which includes the principal performer. We have said 'a large woman,' for no etherealisation was possible of a figure intended to be seen first, and dressed *de rigueur* in blue and crimson. On the contrary, the dimensions are purposely enlarged by the grand flutter of her mantle, fastened securely across her breast with a gigantic knot. Nor do her feet rest on space, but on a solid mass of dark grey clouds, among which, dotted like single flowers, are beautifully coloured cherubs with the novel accessories of black wings, intended probably to give a greater appearance of stability to her airy platform. The vehement actions of the apostles have also a double purpose, for their upstretched arms unite the lines of their group with that of the Madonna, to which they also direct the more attention. But the group that would most have perplexed an ordinary artist is that of the '*Padre eterno*' above, with an angel about to crown the Virgin. This difficulty Titian has overcome

by a legitimate trick. For the figure of the Almighty, though ample in effect and perfect in buoyancy, is reduced by strong perspective foreshortening to a thin line, in which all definition of feature and expression is lost. How this perspective is brought about, and where the line of the horizon, and consequently the eye of the spectator, is placed, are questions which will not be asked too curiously before such a picture.

We must not pause to analyse the ineffable magic of the master's Holy Families, where maternity and its Idol, childhood and its playmate, with landscape, flowers, and household scenes, present pictures of purest domestic sanctity. No fitting church furniture these to crack, blacken, and moulder on altars, with candles smoking them, and vulgar artificial flowers hiding them. Rather are they the suitable accessories for happy homes of succeeding generations, which they help to link each to each both in natural piety and pure taste.

More idyllic still in the deification of

Innocence, while kindred in purity of sentiment, is the picture called the 'Three Ages.' The youth blowing the pipe, and the sweet maiden at his side, sit there in halcyon unconsciousness of all, save the bliss of existence. To whom the sleeping *amorini*, and the little Cupid unceremoniously waking them, belong, and why they are there except to illustrate another phase of felicity, is left to our imagination. Death has not entered this sphere of ethereal existence, for the youth who seems its Adam knows not that he is naked. The old man, therefore, in the background, ruminating over a type of mortality, is a solecism, probably introduced later to give the name; for he intrudes not in Lefebvre's etching.

But Titian, equally with the Greeks, was no less at home in scenes of passion than in those of dignity and repose. The picture that has been indefensibly lost to the world, called the 'Peter Martyr'—a legendary subject belonging to the Dominican order, and much in vogue in the fifteenth and sixteenth cen-

turies—represented an incident in which the passion of terror received its highest modern embodiment. The figure of the attendant friar escaping for his life has been likened to Michael Angelo, but we know nothing by the great Florentine so sudden and instantaneous in action. It can better be compared to the antique—to the 'Laocoon' in the intensity of the terror, and to the Lycian marbles in marvellous expression of movement in drapery. As to suddenness of action, disconnected from any other features, Rubens may furnish a parallel. Here also Titian shows his capacity to deal with some of the deeper conditions of the Fine Arts. So painful a sensation as that of intense fear was not to be rendered such to the spectator. The fleeing man is meant to tell the tale; not to torture our feelings at sight of a fellow-creature in a moment of supreme distress. Not by accident, therefore, was he placed at the very edge of the picture, where, in his headlong fling, he will be out of our sight and safe in a moment. Nor by accident either

has Titian clothed him in drapery of a higher order than his works usually show. Knowing that terror is not a subject on which the eye could happily dwell, the master puts forth all his power and sinks the emotion in the art. For this end he has resorted to no indistinctness. The terrified man seen in the grandest muscular wring,—arms and drapery tossed in one direction, and the head turned in another,—is placed against the brightest light on the picture. Yet, however prominent, he plays but a secondary part; that of the herald announcing what is to come. For the real interest is concentrated on the tragedy about to be enacted—on the monk about to earn his martyrdom, over whom the dagger of the assassin and the palm of victory are alike suspended. And here the master contrives to extend the moment represented. The Dominican is on the ground—a strong man, still unhurt—but his fate is sealed; for the assassin in his furious onslaught rests with his whole weight on the left foot, and that foot, whether by accident

or design, is planted on the robe of the monk. There can be no struggle, therefore, where the victim cannot rise. In this picture Titian escapes from all comparison with Bellini. Between the two versions of the same subject—we refer to the 'Peter Martyr' by Bellini in the National Gallery—lies nothing less than the entire difference between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Where Titian soars to the highest summits of dramatic power in the telling of the tale, Bellini with his business-like murderer, his meek victim, and leisurely evading friar, scarcely rises above convention. Titian's picture, of which numerous copies exist, constituted a class of its own; for while excelling himself in the deeper philosophy of art, he maintains his wonted level in the grandeur of his solemn trees and distant landscape, all massed in the departing light which lends the horror of loneliness to the violent scene.

As another instance of passionate expression, though in gentler form, may be

cited the 'Noli me tangere' in the National Gallery. The figure of the Saviour is curiously unsympathetic; but the beautiful 'Magdalen' is a further example of Titian's power over suddenness of action, as, in a passion of surprise and ecstasy, she has flung herself on her knees. And here he again extends the story beyond the moment given —this time before it, instead of after. A woman on her knees may have been there for minutes. It rested with the painter's ingenuity to show that she has only just fallen; for the delicate white drapery of her sleeve, lifted by the sudden action, has not had time to subside, but still flutters in the air.

We have traced Titian through a variety of subjects, in all of which he is what Leonardo da Vinci said the true painter ought to be—'*padrone di tutte le cose.*' But, though master of all, all were not equally sympathetic to him. Let us turn to a specimen of that class which was most so.

The 'Bacchus and Ariadne' in the

National Gallery represents Titian in his truest character. It is the antique in a modern language. It shows how the Greeks would have painted, had their instincts led them to the cultivation of colour, in lieu of that science of form with which they have underlaid the whole realm of modern art. It is a world in which the best defined principles of Nature are united with the fancy of a wild and riotous mythology. We are not strangers to this union. The Drama and Poetry, Shakspeare and Milton, have exemplified its true conditions; transporting us to spheres wherein, however extravagant the seeming discord, the allegiance to Nature preserves the keynote. 'From beyond the scope of Nature if the poet summon possible existences, he subjugates them to the law of her consistency.'[1] On this principle we learn to understand the 'Bacchus and Ariadne' as we sit before it, wondering why our minds and sympathies consent to fantastic forms and combinations we should dread or loathe if

[1] Essays of Elia, *Sanity of true Genius.*

real. But Fable is only Nature that has passed through a certain heat of the mind. It is as fermentation to the natural juice of the grape. The poet knows when to check it, short of injury to the noble ingredients on which it acts. In this picture, full of light and sparkle as of an intoxicating cup, it is Nature alone which supplies the substance of the draught. Though our head is in cloud-land, amid visionary forms and colours, our feet are safe on Mother Earth. As in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' the creatures of another sphere are only ourselves with a difference, and that difference only such as exists between real life and a stage play, which we know to be a fiction. Man can imagine nothing out of Nature, though he give to a human being the ears and hoofs of a fawn, or join the man and the horse, as in the ancient Centaur. But art, with its foremost condition, that, namely, of pleasing the eye, can indulge in fewer freaks of fancy than poetry. The Cyclop, with one eye, and that in his forehead—a monstrous apparition to

the sight—is therefore an interdicted subject. Titian had experience of the ignorance of his employers in this respect. The Palazzo della Loggia at Brescia, completed in 1560, required internal decorations, and the master was engaged to supply three large compartments. One was to represent Vulcan and the Cyclops at the forge. The committee, consisting of three Brescian gentlemen, gave their written instructions for the design.[1] Vulcan was to be a '*vecchio brutto e zoppo*,' of thin face, and with a dirty, sooty body. The Cyclops were to have but one large round eye in the forehead. A river-god, in another compartment, was to have his face of a greenish-blue colour: '*con la faccia cerulea, quasi verdeggiante.*' Titian thanked the gentlemen for their information, '*sul conto della poesia*,' which he assured them he should endeavour to accommodate to the exigencies of his own art. Whether from signs of being painted in his ninety-second year, or from non-observance of these '*avvertimenti*,' his pictures failed to

[1] *Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society*, vol. iv.

please, and the fire which destroyed the building eight years later swept away all evidence of the real reason.

The picture before us, to return to the 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' is a type of the limits within which the painter may freely sport. The figures are drunken; they are naked; they frolic in wildest license; and all without shocking our proprieties. A beautiful woman striking her tambourine in such company does not offend us. The snakes wreathing round the shaggy monster who heads the rabble rout—the Silenus, all fat, tipsiness, and roguery, held on to his ass—the satyr tossing aloft his haunch of venison like an Irishman his shillelagh—the little fellow, half boy, half fawn, dragging the head of a calf after him by way of go-cart, and barked at by a real dog with a red collar, as any little pet dog would bark at an impudent urchin—all these, however untrue in a prosaic sense, commend themselves to the human taste as the generous compound of what are soundest and most precious in this life—the principles of Nature

and the genius of Man. To extol this picture for the splendour of the colouring addressed to the eye, is just but utterly inadequate praise. So full is the scene just depicted of air, space, sound, heat, and motion, that no one sense suffices to take it all in. We devour the colour, we breathe the atmosphere, we feel the heat, we follow the motion, and we hear the tumult.

Nor may Titian's powers as a portrait painter be omitted in this brief analysis, though with Bellini in the same city, and Holbein at Basle, the assertion that he was the father of portrait painting is not tenable. But if not the first he was the greatest. For as the greater includes the less, and no man can be a fine portrait painter unless he be much more, so this branch of excellence naturally found itself within the complete circle of the master's subjects. The portraits by a great historical and poetical painter are like the conversation of a great writer. We see him in a familiar and spontaneous form—his less deliberate thoughts, enriched by the

culture of previous higher aims. We may be sure, therefore, that Titian gave to every physiognomy not only its best aspect, but something beyond. For admitting the general truth of the axiom that no painter can put more mind into his portraits than he himself possesses, we obtain in the grand and thoughtful character he has given to his sitters the measure of his own mental calibre; at the same time something of the dignity which characterises his portraits must be ascribed to the habits of the day. The manners of the Italian upper classes, as described by contemporaries, were stately, formal, and sedate. The Venetians, especially, from many concurrent reasons—such as their habitual participation in state affairs, their semi-oriental costume, and their limited sphere of locomotion—were the extreme exponents of this dignified demeanour. Nor can there be any doubt that the solemnity which properly characterised those portraits of living individuals introduced into sacred pictures, contributed, even in independent portraiture, to the gravity of expres-

sion. The painter of the twelve apostles in the 'Cena'—the intensest form of individuality seen in sacred art—might be expected to break through the austerer rules in mere portraiture; and accordingly Leonardo da Vinci was the first to venture on the smile. But no sign of such innovation occurs in the Venetian school. However gay and pleasing in colour to the eye, the human face remains grave and tranquil in expression even in its most festive scenes. Titian's very revellers in the 'Bacchus and Ariadne' are serious. There remain what we have called the painter's own 'reasons' to notice. For as, according to Lodovico Dolce, Titian abstained from 'vermilion cheeks and coral lips,' because they gave to faces the effect of masks, so a similar consideration doubtless influenced him in not breaking up that breadth of light which a tranquil expression preserves.

Titian's male portraits are too numerous to specify. Injured and over-painted as most of them are, there is scarcely a genuine specimen which does not read a lesson to the

modern artist. As one which unites history, poetry, and individuality in a degree unattained before or since, may be cited that of 'Charles V. on Horseback,' in the Madrid Gallery. A small, insignificant, morose-tempered, ugly Spaniard, of a German type, fair and blue-eyed, with a long chin, a scrubby beard, and a red moustache, is here transformed into a grand and mournful type of Bigotry and Despotism; who rides on and on through life, as in this picture, fenced in armour and with couched lance, till, sated with power and disappointed with all things, he rests in a monastery, and ends in his grave.

We have mentioned male portraits; for it is significant of the trivial and almost invisible part played by Venetian women that a painter so peculiarly master of the qualities most favourable to female beauty should have had comparatively so few female sitters. Bellini, be it remarked, had apparently none. In the character of commissions it seems that only women of the highest rank—a Duchess of Ferrara, a Duchess of Urbino, an Isabella

d'Este, and the dead Empress of Charles V. —claimed Titian's brush. In his grand picture of the Cornaro family, with nine figures of different ages, no mother, wife, or daughter appears. The same absence of any female member is seen in the Pesaro altar-piece in the Frari, where the beautiful young head, hitherto classed as a girl, is now proved to be the portrait of a youth. It would seem, therefore, that when Titian painted a woman it was for the pure pleasure of rendering beauty. This was obviously his object with his own beautiful daughter Lavinia, so often repeated by him; now holding aloft a casket —now fruit and flowers—now, as Salome, the Baptist's head. Of his wife's features there is no record. Modern connoisseurship has even reduced the number of those graceful fancy portraits long imputed to him—the so-called '*Bella di Tiziano*,' the '*Schiava di Tiziano*,' and the 'Lady with the Lute,' being now rightly adjudged to Palma. In corroboration of the paucity of his female types, it is evident that the admiration with which his

portraits inspired Vandyck is solely reflected in that painter's male sitters. Vandyck's women have no reflex from Titian.

In the universality of the great Venetian's powers it may be said that in landscape he equally takes the lead. Here again that perception of the abstract truths of Nature which allies him with the art of the Greeks is his leading principle. If asked to define what Titian most sought to express in the sky above and the earth below, we should say the respective characteristics of their *life*. The movement of the cloud—the growth of the tree;—currents of air in the one; currents of sap in the other; neither visible in themselves but seen in their effects. It mattered not how subordinate the part, he threw himself alike into all—the iris and the vine bear as much his signature as the chestnut tree and the dolomite rock. His periodical visits to his native Cadore filled his eye and his sketch-book, and brought the fresh and breezy country into the Lagoons.

The political conditions of Venice were

favourable to a branch of art generally missed from other Italian centres—namely, that of historical painting as distinguished from Scripture events and legendary story. The uninterrupted sequence of the Venetian Republic—the patriotism of her citizens, and the splendour of her public buildings—gave subjects, demand, and room for a class of decorations illustrative of her history. The wall spaces in the great Council Hall, now occupied by later works, were originally filled with historical scenes by the Vivarini and the two Bellini. Titian also supplied two compartments, one of them representing the battle of Cadore, won by the Venetians over the Imperialists. All these perished in the fire which destroyed that portion of the Ducal Palace in 1577. A contemporary print from Titian's work shows his mastery of a subject in which men and horses are seen in varied forms, struggling on the banks of a torrent; the scene being laid in the midst of mountain defiles still recognisable as those of Cadore. The sympathy of Rubens's

mind for such subjects is shown by facts of curious coincidence—namely, that to copies by the great Flemish master is owed the preservation both of Titian's 'Battle of Cadore,' and of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Battle of Anghiara,' known under the name of the 'Battle of the Standard.'

We have endeavoured to show how the art of this great master is calculated to enchant the eye and inform the taste, as distinguished from that which touches the heart and kindles religious emotions. It may be safely said that no work by Titian ever started a tear. The more strange, therefore, the fact that a picture by him should stand almost alone in modern times as an object of adoration. The repute gained by pictures, which, like relics, have been credited with the power of working miracles, was confined, and notably in Venice, to the ancient type of Byzantine Madonnas, from which every attraction in the sense of art was absent. What circumstances led to the exception in Titian's case are now forgotten; but the

splendid buildings of the Scuola di S. Rocco remain the substantial result of the offerings of popular devotion to a picture by him of 'Christ bearing His Cross;' now a mere wreck in a left side chapel of the church of S. Rocco.

It is time, in conclusion, to turn from the artist to the man. Although it is difficult to follow the confused arrangement of Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle's otherwise valuable biography, yet there is enough to illustrate, and curiously so, the manners of the times. The beginning of the sixteenth century was for Venice the beginning of her decadence. Commerce and freedom had engendered wealth—the pride of wealth had replaced republican equality by a numerous noblesse—and, without the restrictions of primogeniture, the pride was sure eventually to swallow up the riches. That monument of Venetian vanity, the *Libro d'Oro*, and the greatest danger that ever threatened the State, the League of Cambray, were significantly consentaneous. Given these facts, the character of the age may be inferred. Adulation of

the great, greed of money, increased display, insincerity of language, and morals as loose as the manners were formal—a coincidence which will scarcely be found to fail. The profession of art did not then convey the same peaceful image it does now. Where all was contention and intrigue around him, a great painter became as often the victim as the object of both. No disturbances were too highly placed to fail of disturbing him. The ambition of Emperors, the covetousness of Popes, the plots of minor potentates, all sent their entanglements even into the sanctuary of his art, and their baser influence into the motives of his conduct. That painters should scheme and contrive as well as their betters, could be no wonder. Self-respect, in the sense now attached to it, was unknown then, though every other kind of self-care flourished abundantly. Still, Titian was too great to be confounded with the crowd of mere sycophants and parasites. In disgust of the grovelling language of some of his letters—for, as we have seen, this was far

from being the character of all—we must make the deduction of phrases which were the current coin of the day. Such art as his was incompatible with a low mind, and, imperfect as are the materials of his life, there are enough to prove that he knew when to assert the supremacy of his sovereign mistress above that of all powers, spiritual or temporal.

It was at this time, 1508–10, when the wars with the Emperor Maximilian and his allies had reduced the State for a brief space to her last pawn, that painters from the ravaged Friulian provinces were compelled to seek refuge in Venice. Pellegrino di S. Daniele moved from Udine, Pordenone from Colalto, Morto from Feltre. Their presence, with that of others, still further narrowed the field of patronage and profit, and in turn expelled some of the chief men from Venice. Sebastian Luciano (afterwards Del Piombo) went to Rome, Lorenzo Lotto to the Romagna, and Titian repaired to Padua. Here he engaged the assistance of Domenico

Campagnola, and undertook fresco works for the Scuola of the Carmine, and that of the Santo. Those in the Carmine, now in an advanced stage of decay, were evidently never worthy of him; those belonging to the Santo, representing a miracle of S. Antonio, are of a higher though still inferior grade, giving glimpses rather than proofs of his power. They are the last evidences surviving of a process which had no charms for him. Nor, considering the conditions of fresco, is it surprising that one whose peculiar excellence was the manipulation of oil colours, should have turned from a practice where all such dexterity was impossible. In 1512 Titian returned to Venice, where the death of Giorgione in 1511, and the increasing age of Bellini, gave him for the first time an open field for employment.

Meanwhile Venice herself, safe as a haven from invasion, had become the home not only of art but of printing and letters. Petrarch had bequeathed his library to the State, and Cardinal Bessarion did the same.

This bequest was especially enriched with precious MSS. of classic authors; but the Aldine presses, while aiming chiefly at the reproduction of Greek works, included all the literature of the day in their activity. It must be confessed that the period when Bembo's 'Asolani' were thought entertaining, and Aretino and his works were called 'divine,' does not give a high impression of the taste and morals of the readers. The literary spirits, however, which assembled in the Aldine Academy were evidently no dull companions, though they affected to converse only in Greek. Titian was enrolled among them, though it is much to be doubted whether he ever spoke any but the soft Venetian dialect, which evidently eschewed all superfluous consonants as persistently then as it does still. But he was fond of society, and was as much by turns the polished courtier and the '*bon Compar*' as Michael Angelo was ever the reverse of both. His first contact with the great of the land did not begin auspiciously. The house of Este

at Ferrara had distinguished themselves by the patronage of art. Alfonso, the Duke of Titian's time, was in no way behind his predecessors in this respect. He had endeavoured to purchase the drawings and MSS. of Leonardo da Vinci from his executor, Melzi; he had employed Giovanni Bellini; and he desired to possess pictures by Titian and Raphael. Of course he obtained promises from both, for no men are more driven to use the future tense than eminent artists; but the time that necessarily elapsed before such promises could be fulfilled tried that virtue of patience of which the Duke had but small share. The transition from ceremony to rudeness was rapid, and an insolent letter from Alfonso, threatening with his resentment the man who had already painted the 'Assumption,' shows the contrast between the patrons of those days and ours. But it was not the custom for artists to take offence. Titian, like his fellows, was accustomed to paint pictures for the places they were intended to occupy. Accordingly, on more

than one occasion, he and his canvases made their way by the slowly towed crafts on the Po to the dismal city of Ferrara, and found lodging in the grim castle of its sovereign. In the absence of records it is seldom possible to assign dates, but the entries of eatables weekly provided in the castle show that Titian partook of 'salad, salt meat, oil, chestnuts, oranges, cheese, and wine,' by the light of 'tallow candles,' in February 1516. It was in Ferrara that he is believed to have completed Bellini's 'Feast of the Gods,' now in Alnwick Castle, and to have painted the three other Bacchanals which form a series with it (two being in the Madrid Gallery); and the 'Bacchus and Ariadne,' already described, in the National Gallery. In the classic mania which affected all Italy at that period there could be no difficulty in providing him with mythological subjects. At the same time the suggestion of the biographers that Ariosto was his prompter at Ferrara, is entitled to all credence. The Poet sang the

Painter,[1] and the Painter more than once portrayed the Poet—one specimen being in our National Gallery. These facts have been magnified in the exaggeration of Italian writers into a romantic friendship, but there is no reason to think that either act bespoke more than mutual recognition and courtesy.

Titian's rise in fame and position is shown now by his increasing indifference to the threats and remonstrances of his patrons. He was often between two fires; menaced by the Signory with the withdrawal of his broker's patent (once diverted from him to Pordenone, as already said), if certain works were not accomplished; and pressed by the Duke's agents not to trifle with their august master, who evidently thought pictures could be ordered to a day like any other kind of furniture. He wrote courtier letters, playing off the one against the other, and meanwhile executed private commissions. For the religious corporations in Venice had become formidable competitors for fine works. Palma

[1] *Orlando Furioso*, 2nd edition, 33rd canto.

Vecchio was a master who had preceded Titian in reputation, while at the same time greatly influencing his practice: for Titian had sought to emulate Palma in softness, as Giorgione in richness; eventually combining and surpassing both. The time was now come when Palma and Titian entered into rivalry. The brotherhood of St. Peter Martyr, whose altar stood in the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, invited designs for a grand work to adorn it, and in 1528 Palma, Titian, and Pordenone—the last mainly formed by the two first—entered the lists. The sketches were exhibited for public approval, and the decision fell on Titian. This was the origin of the 'Peter Martyr' we have described, which occupied him for two years; and while believed to have tasked his powers more than any other work, it certainly embodied a mighty step in his art. For during its progress he had been subjected to an influence never encountered in vain. Michael Angelo, escaping from the siege of Florence in 1529, had taken refuge in Venice,

and the effect on Titian was seen in a grandeur to which he had never attained before. 'If ever a picture was uniformly grand, this is.'[1] Among the generations of artists who have studied before it, Rubens again appears. A large drawing from the picture is recorded among his remains, though no longer traceable.

Titian was now master of a house, and married, though when, or to whom, except that the lady's name was Cecilia, is not known. But the birth of his eldest son Pomponio, who held benefices, and wore a clerical dress from his fifth year—a false position which doubtless contributed to make the little 'Monsignorino,' as Aretino calls him, the scapegrace he eventually became—the birth of this son in 1525 gives an approximate date. Another son, Orazio, bred up as a painter, followed, and then a daughter, Lavinia; these births being succeeded by the death of the mother in 1530, when Titian, who is described by contemporaries as over-

[1] Second series of *Literature of the Fine Arts*, p. 49.

whelmed with grief, took his sister, Orsa Vecelli, to live with him.

The intimacy of the master with Pietro Aretino, who, with Sansovino, the sculptor and architect, formed a triumvirate of friendship only interrupted by death, has been criticised as strange in a man of his standing. But if he erred, he did so in good company. A priest called Aretino 'the fount of virtue.' A bishop protested to long for him 'as the Jews longed for the Messiah.' The commonest appellations by which he was addressed were '*unico*,' '*virtuosissimo*,' and '*divinissimo*,' and if no man has been more condemned by posterity, none was ever more courted in his time. The age was base, and society in its upper classes rotten to the core. Princes could only be approached through their vanity or their vices, and in most cases their company was a dishonour to genius, whether of poet or painter. The Medici, Lodovico Sforza, and others, had set the fashion of drawing literary men around them; but it would be a great mistake to

suppose that this proceeded from any taste for letters, or desire to encourage merit. Italians could always write sonnets. The princes wanted flattery, and the parasites pay —and this exchange was an understood thing. Aretino, in these respects, was the extreme outgrowth of the age. Without even the homage of hypocrisy which vice pays to virtue, he was too openly mendacious to be called insincere. His cleverness made him master of all situations, and of most secrets; his venality and unscrupulousness rendered him a power, and all powers were propitiated then.[1] But it is not always just, in spite of the proverb, to judge a man by his associates; and for Titian's intimacy with this reprobate there were some excuses. Aretino was a humourist, and wit is the tired painter's most congenial restorer; he was also a lover of Nature. In this he was con-

[1] The following lines appended to a portrait of Aretino, engraved by Hollar, are a satire worthy of his own pen :—

'Questo è Pietro Aretino, poeta tosco,
Chi d'ogni un disse male, eccetto che di Dio;
Scusandosi con dir, non lo conosco.'

spicuously before his age. Where else, but in his letters, do we find the description of a sunset? palaces looking ethereal instead of solid. Where else do we even find admiration for the peculiar conditions of Venice? Another redeeming quality was that he used his arts—base as they were—for his friends equally as for himself. It was Aretino's management that secured the patronage of the Gonzagas for the painter. The process was not creditable to either. Titian writes an abject letter to the Duke (June 1527), comparing him to Christ, and Aretino to St. Paul, and sends therewith two portraits, one of them being of Aretino, 'whom your Excellency loves for his many virtues,' and which he begs his Excellency to accept. The Duke thanks 'M. Tuciano' in return, and gives him to understand that he shall be ready to requite the obligation. Of this readiness Aretino soon reminds him as of a debt: for the acceptance of a present was then equivalent to a promise of handsome payment for it. But while he continued

during his life faithfully to exercise his unscrupulous pen in favour of Titian—and there is no doubt that many commissions for portraits were owing to these means—the obligation had to be returned in higher coin; for Aretino's letters to great personages show that pictures by this master, and gems and medals by other noted artists, were unscrupulously levied by him to push his own fortunes.

Meanwhile the star of Titian was rising in the person of the greatest sovereign of the age. Charles V., after the retreat of the Turks from Hungary, resolved to meet Clement VII. at Bologna, and for that purpose crossed the Alps (November 1532) into the Friuli, and was entertained a few days later at the Court of Mantua. Charles was an ardent collector, and seems to have had some discernment in art, a capacity probably inherited through his Burgundian descent. He had not been in the Palace of the Gonzagas an hour before he proceeded to inspect its contents, and was so struck by Titian's portrait of the Duke as to

express a desire to be painted by the same hand. An urgent summons was immediately expedited to Venice, but Titian had some reason for preferring to meet the Emperor later at Bologna, and declined to appear. Charles V. would seem to have anticipated the French in the system of subsidising pictures. As the conqueror of a large portion of Italy he had cities and provinces to bestow, and a cession of fine works was in part the understood price. Agents were accordingly despatched, and written lists made out wherever princes with galleries were candidates for the imperial favour. This was especially the case with the reigning family at Ferrara, who were compelled to surrender portraits and other works by Titian. The master's first presentation took place at Bologna in the spring of 1533, when the desired portrait was begun. It is related that Lombardi, the sculptor, anxious to steal a sketch of the imperial features, begged Titian to let him pass into the august presence in the character of his servant; whereupon

Titian introduced him bearing his paint-box. When the sitting began Lombardi took a lump of wax from his pocket—slipping it into his sleeve whenever he thought himself observed—and so contrived to model a medallion portrait. But Charles found out the *ruse*, and, taking it graciously, ordered the work to be executed in marble. Titian's sketch was a bust size, and bareheaded, and is supposed to have been the original of the full-length in armour, and of the other in gala dress—the first lost, and the second still in the gallery at Madrid. Charles was so satisfied, that he is reported to have declared his determination never to sit to another. At all events, a flowery patent, comparing himself to Alexander, and the painter to Apelles, appointed Titian his painter-in-chief. This was accompanied by unprecedented honours, intended, doubtless, to gratify the Signory as well as the artist. The title of Count Palatine was bestowed—with all attendant privileges; amongst them that of legitimising children not born in wedlock of parents below the rank of

baron—also the Knighthood of the Golden Spur, with sword and chain and entry to court; and the elevation of his children as Counts of the Empire, with four generations of ancestors ready-made. Titian's cup of honour was now full. The Emperor, however he may have neglected his obligations afterwards, paid handsomely at first. Nor was the imperial favour ever withdrawn—nor, on the other hand, encroached upon. The painter had reception at court whenever he would, and more invitations to Madrid and elsewhere than he accepted.

The next important step in Titian's life was a visit to Rome. Pope Clement VII. was dead, but Paul III. who succeeded, and his illegitimate descendants, the Farneses, so long as they were united with Charles V. against some common prey, were worthy objects of propitiation. Titian had already adventured some speculation in that quarter in the form of three family portraits—the Pope and his son, separate and together—taken on a second visit to Bologna. Aretino

warned him that the Farneses paid habitually only in '*carezze*;' but the insatiable greed for benefices for the graceless Pomponio—and Cardinal Farnese had one especially tempting in his gift—overruled all warnings. The speculation failed, for a meeting between Charles and the Pope ended in a coolness, and neither pay nor benefice was forthcoming. The inducements that tempted the painter two years later, 1545, to try his fortune at the very head-quarters of the Farneses, seem to have principally proceeded from Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, who, as nominal commander of the Venetian forces, resided partially in Venice, where he drew all the notabilities in letters and art around him. No great persuasion could have been needed to take a painter to Rome. It was protection and favour that were more required, and Guidobaldo, who was a friend of the Farneses, and subsequently married to the Pope's granddaughter, gave both. He carried the master off in his own suite to Pesaro, and sent him thence with a princely escort to Rome. Here Titian was

lodged at the Palace of the Belvedere, entertained by the Pope and by his grandson the Cardinal, welcomed by Cardinal Bembo, escorted about by Sebastian del Piombo and Vasari, and visited by Michael Angelo. Would that some journal or jottings of his impressions had been left! even as scanty as those by Albert Dürer on his visit to Venice. Rome and her treasures, though only eighteen years after the siege and sack, '*descritta da Tiziano Vecellio*,' would have been a legacy to posterity worthy to rank with his pictures. It is obvious from Aretino's letters, as well as from passages in Vasari, that they expected nothing less from the influence of Rome than the conversion of Titian into that 'faultless monster' of art, which was the *beau idéal* of the Carracci school. Titian, we may be sure, said little, but appropriated all he could use, and wished, as most men of sixty-nine would wish, that he had come sooner. He executed noble works, of which the greater part have perished; and it is significant of the Vatican habits of the time that, though the Council of

Trent was about to sit for the reformation of morals, the subjects painted by command of the Papal family included a Venus, a Danae, and the illegitimate offspring of Pope and Cardinal. The picture of Paul III., with his grandsons Alessandro and Ottavio Farnese, still survives in the Naples Gallery as monuments of the master's skill. It will not do to look too curiously into the worldly results of this Roman residence. Caresses were not wanting, but it was long before anything else came. The artists who had been trembling for their own patronage were relieved by Titian's receiving no commission of public importance, and the long-coveted benefice of 'Colle' seemed as far off as ever. That it did eventually fall to the share of Pomponio can hardly be grudged, for Titian had earned it over and over again. It is noteworthy that the same cause which brought the benefice within Titian's grasp led him to decline the sinecure of the Seals, set free by the death of Sebastian del Piombo. A letter from Titian shows indubitably that he had been willing to

don the cowl of the friar over his gold chain and sword, which was the first condition of the 'Piombo;' and to exchange his residence at Venice for one at Rome, which was the second. But at this crisis arrived the first summons from Charles to attend him at Augsburg. The man whom the conqueror at Mühlberg delighted to honour rose immediately in importance. The Farneses hastened to propitiate him by the long-desired gift, and Titian, with fresh fields and pastures new in sight, elected to abide by the most powerful of his patrons and let the Seals go to another.

Meanwhile, on leaving Rome, Titian had taken the route by Florence, where, by way of exception, the Duke Cosimo did not evince the usual princely desire of sitting to him; or, rather refused to do so, leaving the master free to visit churches and palaces, then gorgeous with frescoes unwhitewashed and pictures unrestored. On returning to Venice, his Roman impressions are traceable in a large altar-piece he undertook for the church

at Serravalle, with the Miraculous Draught of Fishes in the background. Here the reminiscences of Raphael's tapestry of the same subject, adapted to Titianesque ideas, with a gondolier standing, instead of the seated figure rowing, appear unmistakably.

Titian's journey to Augsburg was undertaken in January 1548. The biographers dwell on the devotion to his imperial patron which could induce a man, turned seventy, to cross the Alps by the steep bridle-paths then alone existing, in the heart of winter. But setting aside the fact that Titian was then so strong and hale as to have nearly thirty years of active life before him, there was at that time, and is still, no race better able to confront cold than the Northern Italians.[1] It is true that Titian in one of his letters from Augsburg alludes to 'this torrid zone where we are all dying of cold;' but this is rather a

[1] This was proved by the Italian troops in the French army in the retreat from Moscow. And the evidence has been repeated of late by the superior resistance to the climate of the Italian part of the crew in the Austrian expedition to the North Pole.

playful exaggeration than a real complaint. The victory at Mühlberg and the Diet had then assembled a motley crowd — Italian, Spanish, and German, of royal and distinguished personages, captives as well as conquerors—in Augsburg, who furnished Titian with almost as many sitters. Especially does it appear that the royal ladies, who were there in force, sat to him. It was then that the equestrian portrait of Charles was executed which we have described—almost the only surviving memento of this busy time, the rest having perished, as it is believed, in the burning of the Palace of the Pardo in 1608.

Two years later Titian was again in Augsburg by imperial command, where he found much the same company; with the addition of the Infant Philip, then twenty-four years of age—to paint whom was the chief reason for his visit. The large, full-length portrait of that ill-favoured Prince, often repeated by the master, still hangs in the Madrid Gallery—a picture of ominous

responsibility and consequences, which being sent to the English court decided the fate of Mary Tudor, and indited a dark page in the history of England. Among the 'imaginary conversations' that the pen of Savage Landor initiated, few could have better occupied him than one between Charles V. and Tiziano Vecelli; and few had such sanction in fact. The two figures suit ill on one canvas, unless in respect of contrast. Charles, morose and taciturn—'a mummy,' as the Protestants called him, in person, and a cynic in spirit—having tried all things and now beginning to feel the emptiness of all; and the painter with his fine person, grand manners, splendid health, and enjoyment of life; and with that power in his good right hand of which no possessor ever tired. And the contrast may account for the confidence with which the Emperor treated him. Charles was peculiarly disturbed in spirit at that time. He was quarrelling with the Pope about the Council of Trent; he was contending with his brother about the succession to the Empire; he was

vainly trying to force the Protestants back into the arms of Rome; he was exasperated with his royal prisoners for their very fortitude in captivity; and he had the gout! No wonder that he was tempted into more confidence than was his wont towards a man not his own vassal, but the son of a free state, to whom the very subject of a picture he desired entailed a quasi confession of his own wretchedness. For Charles commissioned him to devise a subject which would embody the perturbation of his mind and his longing for rest. Nor is it surprising that this should have further entailed the avowal that his heart was set on exchanging the cares of empire for the peace of a convent. A painter nowadays might be puzzled how to express these imperial sentiments, but the ecclesiastical repertory provided a form. Titian enlisted heavenly agency. He represented the Three Persons of the Trinity above, surrounded with the usual phalanx of patriarch, prophet, and saint. In the centre is the Virgin interceding with Christ for the imperial

family, who kneel on the clouds before them —the group being headed by Charles himself. This was painted in 1550. In 1555 Charles retired to Yuste, where the picture was never out of his sight.

Here we must leave Titian with his fortunes at their climax. It appears that he never quitted Venice again. For years after he had attained his great reputation he inhabited a house to the north-east of Venice, overlooking Murano and the Friulian Alps, called the 'Biri Grande;' with a delightful garden stretching down to the water's edge, in which grew the trees represented in the 'Peter Martyr,' all of which, house, garden, and trees, have vanished now. The description by a cotemporary of a supper there, given to a select few—of the pictures which were enjoyed while the sun was above the horizon —of the gondolas containing beautiful women accompanied by musicians, vocal and instrumental, which swarmed in the lagoon after sunset—and of a table covered with delicate viands and precious wines, with Titian pre-

siding—conjures up a combination of luxurious images which Venice alone could have realised. But the cloud of human care overshadowed the father's heart. Lavinia, his daughter, was 'the beloved of his soul;' Orazio, his active assistant in the studio, never gave him a sorrow; but Pomponio, his first-born, was an incorrigible profligate who wasted his father's earnings in a disorderly life. Titian had not been sparing in remonstrance and punishment, till finally his despair of his son's reformation went the length of refusing him one of the many benefices which had cost him such pains, and bestowing it on a nephew instead.

The activity of the painter was kept up to his latest years, and if many of the pictures then executed show a decline of power, this is owing rather to the extent to which he employed assistants, and inferior artists, than to the falling off of his own prowess. The 'Actæon' and the 'Calisto' in the Bridgwater Gallery, painted after he was eighty-three, still show a colourist in the most enchanting

sense of the word. Nor did the cunning of his hand ever quite forsake him. A picture executed for Philip II. in 1574–5—the painter then ninety-seven to ninety-eight years of age—in commemoration of the Battle of Lepanto, now in the Madrid Gallery, may serve as a moral on the decline of all human power; and yet in the armour and purple lake drapery some of the wonted fire still survives.

Titian's first and last illness was short and terrible. The plague—the too familiar scourge of Venice—raged there in 1576 as it had never done before, carrying off 50,000 out of a population of 190,000. It spared not the beautiful home at Biri Grande. Titian succumbed to it on August 27, and his son Orazio soon after him. Laws had been passed to forbid the interment of plague-patients in any church within the city, but Titian's greatness overrode all law. The highest dignitaries of S. Marco conveyed him to his grave in the Church of S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, where he reposes near one of his grandest creations, the 'Madonna di Casa Pesaro.'

THE LIFE AND WORKS

OF

RAPHAEL

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF RAPHAEL.

THE deep significance of Art to the human race, in her two general forms of sound and representation, is a fact which, however obvious, can never be trite. The gift of speech to man in his intercourse with his fellow-creatures is one which he can misuse as he pleases. Accordingly that perversion ensures that the fountain sends forth waters both bitter and sweet. But what we call 'Art,' whether presented to us in mute form and colour, or heard in cunning arrangements of the musical scale, was bestowed on man with an absolute incapacity for the expression of evil. Only when basely linked by him with meanings of his own, foreign to her nature—uttered through rather than by her—can her inherent innocence suffer wrong.

Worthily used, she supplies a neutral haven, separate and undefiled, in which man rests and works, harmless and happy; fulfilling that vocation which belongs to no other intelligence.' For 'die Kunst, O Mensch, hast du allein.'

The eminence to which the art of painting attained in that period of social corruption which, taken all in all, has no parallel in modern Christian history—the period of the Italian Renaissance—was a crucial test of its inherent purity. The mere delineation of Nature's innocent beauties—the sacred sphere of the landscape painter—was not demanded at the hand of the Italian painter. His subjects, with one Divine exception, were exclusively the human race, and in these he was hemmed in with a cordon of strict prescription. The babe, the woman, and the saint were almost exclusively his allotted sphere—the sweetest, holiest, and grandest expression of each his appointed task. That he laboured in the service of religion—so called—was, in the sense of art,

with rare exceptions, nothing to him. Art is the inheritance of the natural man. He may be, and of course ought to be, the religious man also; but while the fact remains indisputable that the impure mythology of the Pagan era allied to itself the noblest creations of art that the world has known, it is fruitless to insist on any direct connexion, in the sense of cause and effect, between the splendour of the work and the purity of the faith. Still, the idea that art and religion have in some way a direct connexion is so pleasing, and therefore so prevalent, that we venture to subject the question to a slight analysis. In this, as in many general ideas, there is apt to be confusion. We assume that what is meant is that a sense of religion inspires the artist in his work, which in turn excites the same sense in the spectator; this emotion in the one being the consequence of the same prior and stronger emotion in the other. It is true that few will look on a directly religious subject without feelings of solemnity, but it does not follow that the artist himself experi-

enced those feelings. His business, whether he felt them or not, was to portray them. The action, for instance, of intense adoration in St. Peter, in the cartoon of the 'Miraculous Draught of Fishes'—one of the most affecting actions we know—can hardly fail to reach the religious sense of the spectator; but, as regards the inspiring principle of the artist, he simply needed to know the appropriate expression of intense faith in St. Peter, as he needed to know the appropriate expression of sudden blindness in the other cartoon of 'Elymas the Sorcerer.' In both, Raphael was but like an actor, giving the proper dramatic action of the one and of the other. We do not admit with Diderot that the more an actor feels his part the worse he is liable to perform it. But certainly he is not bound, as any acquaintance with good actors will convince us, to feel it deeply in order to act it finely. It is enough that he knows how to make us feel what he represents. The actor's conception of his part, and the painter's conception of his subject,

may be placed, without disrespect to either, much on the same level; but the test of the genius of both is the fulness and truthfulness of that conception. There may be genuine religion infused into the lowest as well as into the loftiest occupations of life, viz. the religion of Duty, by which a man doeth whatever his hand findeth to do with all his might. But this religion does not apply more to the artist than to the shoemaker. Both alike may have the most pious motives, and both even invoke the highest help in their allotted task, but here the analogy ceases. In the nature of things, a sense of duty will suffice to make a good shoemaker, but it will not make a good artist; and for this simple reason, that the conditions as to the excellence to be attained are unequal. 'Godliness,' we are told, 'is profitable for all things.' To this rule there are no rational limits. Still, we must hesitate before admitting it as an inspiring power in art (for if in art at all, then it must be an inspiring power in every branch of art—landscape, animals, architec-

ture, &c.—which reduces the argument *ad absurdum*)—and this again for the simple reason that the conditions are not equal; godliness, with God's help, being possible for all men, but art for comparatively few. The one is a grace, the other a gift.

In truth, the more we look into that mystic sphere of feeling and invention which constitutes the domain of the artist, the more we are convinced how impossible it is to lay down any positive principle of cause and effect between religion and art. Himself often a wayward, poetic, nervous being, whose habitual residence is in the clouds, the artist would find it difficult to explain, in terms intelligible to others, the processes even of his own mind or hand—how he works, and what, and why, he feels—far more what are the laws which govern the minds of all artists. But we venture to think that he would readily endorse some such formula of the creed of his profession as the following; namely, that, as fire is kindled by fire, faith by faith, and love by love; so, by the same

law, the artist's genuine source of inspiration is his art, his highest reward again his art, and whatever materials best lend themselves to the expression of beauty in whatever form he may feel it—whether drawn from religion or superstition, from truth or legend—these are his lawful materials. Never did the art of painting revel more freely than in the service of a sensuous worship and a gorgeous ritual—that of the Church of Rome. Still, it must not be forgotten that the better part of what we admire in the artists of the Italian Renaissance was derived not from the pomp of that Church, but from her Christianity. It was Christianity which alone admitted those forms and that variety of expression which were unknown to the Greek mind. The representation of the purely Christian feelings of compassion, humility, and repentance, forms the strength of the art which served the Church of Rome; while the instincts of the artist himself cherished those principles, transmitted from the antique, which glorified beauty and repudiated the

horrible. Italian Art had all things in her favour. The country produced the finest types in man and nature; the Church supplied the demand for a popular trade; and God sent such artists as have not been since. On the other hand, no further proof is needed that Art is dependent neither upon the truths of religion, nor upon right standards of social and political morality, nor upon the sincerity and harmony of men and things around her—for she never flourished more gloriously than when all these conditions were reversed. The Cinque-cento had its moral baseness as well as its glory, and a baseness far greater than its glory. All was cruel and selfish in government, artificial and insincere in manners, gross in passions, and false in sentiment. The language of Dante was exchanged for a bald and pedantic Latin; the worship of Christ for a spurious Platonism; and hired mercenaries replaced the service of native defenders. The country was oppressed and torn by tyrants, bandits, and conspirators. Duplicity was an educa-

tion, successful treachery an accomplishment. Never were the worst features of human nature so deeply studied and so thoroughly practised. The Italian character of the day lent itself to combinations we most abhor. Certain opposing vices and weaknesses are fatal in their union; the strength of the one enhancing the mischief of the other. You can neither protect nor reform a man whose temptations lie in opposite directions. The statesman, at once obstinate and vacillating, ruins his party; the merchant, at once rash and secret, ruins his family; but the man who at once plots and dissimulates, ruins not only his neighbour, but his country—and this last was the typical Italian of the fairest times of art.

While, therefore, the creations of art sprung into existence uninjured by the moral atmosphere surrounding them, the artist in his life and reputation commanded no such immunity. Even if worthy or harmless himself, he was sure to be unworthily depicted by his biographers. The works of the day

are farragos of flattery and pedantry; the one as little complimentary to men of sense and genius as the other. Vasari, in one respect, was an exception. An artist himself however inferior, he knew something of art—its difficulties and its merits—which no other writer did. Otherwise he was as vain, puerile, and mendacious as his age. True connoisseurship there was none, nor could there be, for connoisseurship only follows art as criticism literature, but at a far greater distance.

It may be said that only now are the highest qualities of Italian art being appreciated, and the authors of certain works identified. Painters we most admire now—the choicest masters of the Venetian, Bolognese, and Paduan schools, as well as the giants of the Florentine Quattrocentisti—were passed unnoticed by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his Italian tour. By the same rule the emissaries of Napoleon confiscated no Bellini or Francia, no Ghirlandajo or Botticelli; and though a fine Mantegna and an exquisite Fra Angelico

were among the spoils of the conqueror, the trustees of the Louvre banished the one to the Provinces and relegated the other to the 'garde-meuble.' They would have done the same by Raphael but for his name. The place that name has held unvarying for nearly four centuries is perhaps the highest tribute that genius in any form has realised. The art of Raphael, like that of the Greeks, occupies a throne above the comprehension of the multitude, and therefore one never disputed. There are reputations, thank God—whether in art, letters, or virtue,—of such unassailable standing as to pass unchallenged. Of such is Raphael's. It is true his birth and origin have been sneered at as that of an humble Urbinese potter by an early writer,[1] and a modern author has criticised on the falsest grounds the appropriateness of his Madonnas;[2] but the true rank of his art has remained unquestioned, and his commentators and admirers have given birth to a goodly library.

[1] Felsina Pittrice.

[2] *Modern Painters*, by John Ruskin, M.A., vol. iii., p. 53.

Still, this is a form of homage which may be read two opposite ways. No lower a title than that of 'Il Divino' was thought good enough for Raphael after his death, and it is still in use with his Italian rhetorical panegyrists; but we must remember that the same title was applied to the painter Morales, one of the horrors of the Spanish school. It may be accepted that the taste of the multitude is always second-hand. From the period of Italian art to that of Goldsmith, and from Goldsmith to now, the idle, the ignorant, and the fashionable have prattled of art, and will ever continue to do so. They enter into the list on the plea chiefly of knowing what pleases themselves, but really on the strength of repeating what other people say. Society, in the season of exhibitions, is one great chorus of repetition. Praise Gustave Doré's 'Christ Leaving the Prætorium,' and they are sure to place him above Paul Veronese and Rubens; criticise him, and they have not a word to say in his defence. Now, though no one would have the courage to criticise Raphael, very

few in their hearts, if the truth were told, really admire him, or comprehend why he is admired. It would be very strange if they did, for Raphael's pure and unsensational art is the last to attract the common eye. A definition of the character of his art, given by a well-known connoisseur, was simply 'its excellence;' a definition, however true, no less difficult for most to understand than the art itself.

A beautiful work, printed by her Majesty's order for the Royal Library at Windsor,[1] and which owes its origin to the practical intelligence of the lamented Prince Consort, presents a number of facts which, like all statistics, leads to curious conclusions. The fine collection of drawings by the old masters in Windsor Castle—above fifteen hundred in number, including many by Raphael—attracted the attention of a mind indifferent to no form of

[1] The works of Raphael Santi da Urbino, as represented in the Raphael collection in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, formed by H.R.H. the Prince Consort, 1853-1861, and completed by her Majesty Queen Victoria in 1876.

culture. It occurred to the Prince that these collections might be made much more generally useful for study and reference. His Royal Highness was the master of *system*. However complicated a subject, it soon assumed order and arrangement in his mind. He began by collecting every variety of representation by which the art of Raphael has been known to the public from the earliest times until now. Engravings, etchings, mezzotints, lithographs, photographs, &c., whether of his authentic works or of their copies; whether of works known to be his or only ascribed to him; whether taken from pictures, frescoes, drawings, sculpture; including studies if even only of single heads, hands, or feet; are here categorically noted. Under each head the leading facts are added; the date of the work, for whom executed, in whose actual possession, its size, &c. &c. So numerous are these various versions of the great master, as to fill—arranged under numerous categories, Historical, Scriptural, Holy Families, Madonnas, &c.—a large and closely printed

quarto volume. Thus presented they furnish at a glance a comparative view of the popularity of certain subjects, which sometimes takes us by surprise. We find, for instance, no less than ninety-eight different versions of the 'Transfiguration,' one of Raphael's least interesting works; and no more than twelve of the 'Madonna di S. Sisto,' which Signor Morelli, whom we shall mention further on, and most will agree with him, pronounces to be the most beautiful picture in the world. In this one instance, among many, may be traced something of what we have called the second-hand taste of the multitude. Nor is it unfair to ascribe the popularity of the subject of the 'Transfiguration' to circumstances connected with the picture itself. As the last work by the painter, and exhibited for the first time over his dead body, it naturally acquired an interest, adventitious it is true, but greater than that of any of his previous productions. Occupying also, with the exception of its removal to Paris, always the same place in the Vatican, it has

been more easily accessible, and therefore better known than the 'Sistine Madonna;' which, till its transfer to Dresden, had been buried in a convent church at Piacenza. Thus it was natural that the demand for its representation should have been determined, less by its inherent merits than by the greater number of voices which swelled the echo of its praises.

The catalogues of past days show how little the art of the connoisseur was understood. Great masters were like the modern German *noblesse*; they gave their titles alike to all their branches. All were called roses, when in truth they were only '*rosacæa.*' Leonardo da Vinci stood godfather for the whole Lombard school; Titian and Giorgione for most of the Venetian school, and for many of the North Italian masters. Connoisseurship consisted mainly in knowing what Vasari and Lomazzo had written. But the schoolmaster is abroad now. There is not much to be expected from history, though scraps of information are still being found in

documents, letters, &c., which rectify such things as dates and places; otherwise the chief source of rectification must be gathered from internal evidence. Pictures are allowed now to speak for themselves, and to those who understand their language they have much to say, however more or less difficult to interpret. 'L'art de déviner l'auteur d'un tableau en réconnoissant la main du maître est le plus fautif de tous les arts.'[1]

Connoisseurship is a strictly modern science, requiring the exercise of the closest observation and subtlest analysis. The connoisseur must be endowed with no common qualities. He must possess the impartiality of a judge, the ardour of a zealot, and the patience of a saint. His decisions depend solely upon evidence, but that evidence is of a nature very laborious to collect. Connoisseurship is not a matter of the highest taste, though that is far from being banished from the court, but of the closest comparison. All

[1] L'Abbé du Bos, *Riflessioni critiche sopra la Poesia e la Pittura*, tom. ii. p. 384.

knowledge of art is formed by comparison. The best connoisseur is he who compares on the largest scale and with the narrowest nicety. The judges of art belong to two ranks—the one who has got so far as to say 'This picture is by Perugino' (one of the easiest of masters to identify); the other who can point out why he knows it to be by Perugino.

The people who have in present times most devoted themselves to the study of art are the Germans; the German universities can alone boast chairs for its history. To the Germans, therefore, belongs the merit of introducing sound criticism into the domain of art as well as into that of history. Winckelmann for antique sculpture, Rumohr for Italian art, led the way at the beginning of this century. Passavant, between the years 1838 and 1859, brought out a work on Raphael of such thoroughness and patience as seemingly to exhaust the subject; and now, at length, after long delay, Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle announce the completion of the first part of

their work on Raphael.[1] Meanwhile other investigators of Raphael's life and art have come into the field, and the last two years have witnessed the publication of a number of fresh works. Richard Förster has devoted himself to the examination of the Farnesina ;[2] Hettner suggests a new key to the Vatican frescoes ;[3] Schmarzone investigates the part supposed to have been taken by Raphael in the frescoes by Pinturicchio at Siena ;[4] Müntz presents the French public with a splendidly illustrated biography of the painter ;[5] and lastly, a remarkable Russian work[6] has lately appeared, under the garb of a German

[1] *Raphael, his Life and Works*, with particular reference to recently discovered records. By T. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle. Vol. i. London : 1882.

[2] Farnesina *Studien. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Verhältniss der Renaissance zur Antike.* 1880.

[3] *Italienische Studien zur Geschichte der Renaissance.* 1879.

[4] *Raphael und Pinturicchio in Siena. Eine kritische Studie.* 1880.

[5] *Raphael, sa Vie, son Œuvre, et son Temps.* 1881.

[6] *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Gallerien von München, Dresden, und Berlin. Ein kritischer Versuch, von Ivan Lermollieff, aus den Russischen übersetzt von Dr. Joh. Schwarze.* Leipzig : 1880.

translation, which, like Aaron's rod, swallows up all its rivals. Fortunately for his readers, this mysterious 'Ivan Lermollieff' is more to be trusted for the veracity of his conclusions than for that of his own identity. Though neither Russian nor German, we may not precisely call him a wolf in sheep's clothing; for the disguise covers a generous animal who hurts no one, shows neither teeth nor claws, but deals out sure and vigorous strokes with a great, magnanimous paw, from the fiats of which there seems to be no appeal. Of course the secret could but escape, that under this Muscovite 'alias'—an anagram of his own name with a Russian tail to it, and in the garb of a faultless German style—we have here the work of the Commendatore Giovanni Morelli, an Italian gentleman well known in England; one of the most gifted representatives of political as well as pictorial science—certainly the most widely accomplished man—in the modern Italian nation. The object of this mystification may be summed up in Signor Morelli's

enjoyment of that form of mirth for which we English alone possess an expressive monosyllable. This is carried on with Italian geniality, the more refreshing after the Dryas-dust plodding of good Director Passavant, and the newly invented language in which Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle disguise their copious and valuable contributions. By these means a work, which has electrified the connoisseur world and immediately taken its place as indisputable authority, not only on points which concern Raphael but on general questions of Italian art, is rendered one of the most amusing of the modern curiosities of literature. Let us now turn to the great painter himself.

Raphael Santi was born on Good Friday, March 28, 1483, at Urbino, a small town on the slopes of the Apennines. Few great painters can be named whose fathers have not been artists in some form or degree. Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, was a painter, both in tempera and fresco. He scarcely went beyond the conventional arrangements

of the day, with quiet figures, and an insipidity sometimes rising into a sweetness of expression, in which most writers have been anxious to trace the germs which ripened into his son's art.[1] His qualities, however, are too negative to afford comparison with those of Raphael, though a peculiarity in some of his son's works, even at an advanced period—a flesh-colour with white lights and red half-tints—is often observable in Giovanni's pictures, particularly in the altar-piece of S. Croce, at Fano.[2] Like Mozart, whose birth, at Salzburg, placed him locally midway between those two countries the musical feeling of which he combined, Raphael derived his being from a part of Italy where the tenderest and the strongest qualities of art stood in close proximity. Fine works by Fra

[1] More even than by his works the fame of Gio. Santi is deserved by his chronicle—a MS. poem—preserved in the Vatican Library, and in great part quoted in Passavant's work. This is devoted to the glorification of Duke Frederick of Montefeltro, Lord of Urbino; but its chief interest now consists in what we may call a *catalogue raisonné* of the chief artists of the time, showing a judgment as to their merits which time has more and more confirmed.

[2] *Life of Raphael. Literature of the Fine Arts*, p. 209.

Angelico and Gentile da Fabriano, the one at Forano, near Osimo, the other at Romila, in the Val di Sasso, must have been known to him; while painters of an opposite type, Paolo Uccelli and Pietro della Francesca, both visited Urbino; the last-named residing in Giovanni Santi's house. There was much also in the *genius loci* fitted to nurture such a mind as Raphael's. The little town of Urbino is beautifully situated on one of the highest peaks of the Apennines, with the purest air for the lungs; lovely views of wooded heights with glimpses of the purple Adriatic, and valleys smiling with corn, wine, and oil delighting the eye; and female voices, according to Ivan Lermolieff, of unusual sweetness charming the ear. Here, placed aloft, close to the remains of a humbler residence, is seen the palace of the old Dukes of Montefeltro bridging over the space between two peaks. It contained a library of costly manuscripts, including a noted Hebrew Bible, now forming an important feature in the Vatican Library. Another apartment was

panelled with pictures, some of which have found place in the National Gallery and in the Berlin Museum; while the communication between this remote Court and that of England is seen in the old *Tarsia*, or inlaid woodwork, where to this day the insignia of the Order of the Garter, a distinction conferred on more than one Montefeltro, still appears.

The nature of the young painter thus surrounded was gentle and gracious. We hear of no strife and contention, or forward self-assertion. The jealousies and animosities with which the lives of other Italian painters teem came not near him. On the contrary, mastered apparently by a spell peculiar to himself, as we shall have occasion to show, artists of distinction, his seniors, gave way readily before him. The man and the artist in Raphael were peculiarly in harmony with each other, and both again with the laws of natural development. Raphael's art was of that healthy class, in whatever form it may be seen, which passes from youth to maturity

fulfilling the conditions of each. The timid and modest pencil of his youth involved no feebleness; the power of his later hand boded no extravagance. 'He possessed those evenly-balanced and exquisite qualities which admit not of the more, and vanish with the less. . . . He stood triumphant, exactly on that eminence which leads downwards, on either hand to insipidity or exaggeration. His refinement became weakness in some of his followers, his strength coarseness in others.'[1] Where powers are so universal and equal as in this great man, it is difficult to select a leading quality. Still, there was one which predominated, and has remained to this day distinctively his own. This was the gift of a most exquisite grace. When a work is termed Raffaelesque, it means that it is imbued with a feeling which no other artist has possessed either in such a degree or combined with such masculine concomitants.

The chief sphere of rectification in the

[1] Kugler's *Handbook of Italian Art*, part ii., p. 407.

history of Raphael lies in his early period. Vasari was very imperfectly informed, and, in some respects, so obviously so that the wonder is that his narrative should have been so long and so unquestioningly copied. Passavant's labours, while doing much to fill up gaps, left many errors. For this a deeper connoisseurship than he could boast was required. Owing probably to the premature deaths of both parents—his mother, Magia Ciarla, daughter of an Urbinese tradesman, dying in 1491, and his father in 1494, when their son was respectively eight and eleven years of age—the accounts of his boyhood have been encumbered with legends of his precocity, which pictures have been even fabricated to corroborate; not one of which, it may at once be said, have any pretensions to genuineness.

We have quoted the French saying regarding the difficulty of recognising the author of a picture. In some respects the process would seem simple enough. There is often the signature of the painter himself,

with his Latinised name—the pride and delight of the collector; there are fantastic anagrams of all sorts, with which it is easy to become familiar; there is the capricious signature of some artists in the form of an animal: the parrot of Girolamo da Santa Croce, the monkey of Ercole Grandi the Ferrarese, the owl of Civetta, the scorpion of Lucas Cranach. It is not difficult to be learned thus far, but much more is required to certify whether all this evidence be in itself genuine or forged. As to positive dates, discovered all time-worn and crumbly, lurking in odd corners, they are calculated to deceive —may we venture to say—even an angel from heaven. It is a nice question, for instance, whether that well-known M. D. on M. Reiset's 'Palma' (now in the Duke d'Aumale's possession), with its delicious ancient and mouldy aspect, be genuine or false; though we incline to Lermollieff's shrewd suggestion that the date is too early for the art of the picture itself. Then there is the identity of style between master and

scholar, between fellow-scholars of the same master and with the same model; there is the picture we shall speak further of, composed by one mind and executed by another hand; and, hardest of all for some to distinguish, there is the difference between the good cotemporary copy and the original; generally recognised, it may be said, by an execution inferior to the composition.

Thus the connoisseur whose heart is in his profession is bound to pass his life in perpetually scrutinising, weighing, questioning, and, not least, suspecting. Nor need we wonder. Every picture is in some sense a riddle, many pictures in some degree a plot. The paths of connoisseurship are full of traps for the unwary and of pitfalls for the conceited; while the annals of unlearned and unwary collectors are simply tragic. If a work of art be honest, the signs of authorship, locality, and date are written all over it, back as well as front. The panel of certain groups of artists was of a particular kind of wood; the canvas of others of a particular

kind of woof. A Hebrew inscription on the throne of the Madonna tells a Ferrarese painter. An artist will be known by his pigment as well as by his brush, and, if he changes it, that in turn becomes a date. The very cracks—what Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle are pleased to call 'a peculiar form of crackle'—are signs of a man or a school.

We thus approach that minutiæ of observation of which this curious work exemplifies the, as yet, most perfect example. Lermollieff claims to have first proceeded on that 'experimental system' formulated by all observers of nature, from the time of Galileo and Bacon, of Volta and Darwin. As a new plant to a botanist, so is each new picture to the connoisseur; every part demanding scrutiny, as indicative of the particular genera or the individual hand. Not that the analogy can be complete, for the works of God come before us in undisturbed normal conditions, whereas hardly an old picture can be found in the same state in which it issued from the

hand of the master. In the last century new paint was laid on; in this, old paint is taken off.

In such changes and effacements all evidence becomes much confused. At best the safest test of an artist's individuality is to be sought in that which all painters have studied alike, and all treated differently, viz. in the details of the human form. Every artist has his individual mode of treating a mouth, an ear, a hand. There is the upper lip of Cima da Conegliano, by which he may be recognised; the lower lip in Lorenzo di Credi; and the thumb of Gio. Bellini. The ear of Mantegna is long and bony, that of Raphael round and fleshy, and set deep in the cheek. The ugly round finger-nails of Basaiti distinguish his early pictures. In Raphael's youthful works the hand is thick and clumsy, as we see in the 'Vision of a Knight' in the National Gallery; and such instances might be indefinitely multiplied. It is impossible, as Lermollieff says, to determine the authorship of a picture by subjective

impressions, dependent alone on the taste or fancy of the spectator; there must be also positive facts, discernible by every eye, to which appeal can be made. It is true some of Signor Morelli's German critics have made merry, in their heavy way, at this new mode of identifying a master; but this will not, we may prophesy, deter future students from following his example. It is simply a question of who can see most and best. For where the eye is launched upon a sea of endless likeness and difference, such as is presented by the various schools of Italy, the art of seeing had need be almost as closely cultivated as that of painting.

Signor Morelli, or rather Ivan Lermollieff, for this *sobriquet* is already adopted by his brother critics, has made it his business to clear up the discrepancies and false statements in Vasari's account of the youthful Raphael. For this purpose he has patiently pushed his exploring bark up certain small streams of evidence not hitherto navigated. His object has been to trace the source of

that religio-ascetic character which is embodied in the longing, yearning expression common to all the works of Perugino, and seen in utmost beauty in the early works of Raphael. He has accordingly looked closely into that group of Transapennine painters which arose in Gubbio, S. Severino, Fabriano, and later in Foligno and Perugia; and has convinced himself that this expression occurs only in the schools of Foligno and Perugia. Also that it first dawned in the works of Niccolò Alunno (da Foligno), and, spreading to Perugia, became the leading characteristic by which that school, generally known as the Umbrian school, is distinguished from other art centres in Italy. Whence Niccolò Alunno derived it is the next question. It has been easy to point to the glorious Franciscan church at Assisi, with its wealth of frescoes, as naturally influencing the art of the neighbouring country. But these frescoes, which proceeded exclusively from the school of Giotto, unmixed with the slightest local feeling—for no sign of art-life had stirred

there at that period—show no trace whatever of that peculiar sentiment which we have learned to call Peruginesque. Leaving, therefore, all paths of mere conjecture, we follow Ivan in a careful unravelling of those contiguous but interlaced threads by which particular phases of feeling in art were communicated or inherited from school to school, and from man to man. Certain appearances in art are like peculiar features in a family. They sometimes skip a generation, and show themselves in the grandson. Benozzo Gozzoli, the pupil of Fra Angelico, and the well-known completer of his master's works in the cathedral of Orvieto, is known to have laboured both in the neighbouring little town of Montefalco and in Perugia itself. Various indications in early wall-paintings by Niccolò Alunno in the Cappella della Cancellata, close to Montefalco, show such distinct evidence of the influence of Benozzo, that—all dates concurring—Ivan has no hesitation in declaring Niccolò to have been his pupil; and thus allied through the second

generation to the first developer of religious expression, Fra Angelico.

Again, another painter is found in Perugia, by name Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, of similar tendency in sentiment as Niccolò Alunno. His pictures, chiefly seen in the gallery at Perugia, bear also the evidence of Benozzo Gozzoli's vicinity; so that the same source for the same expression may be assigned to him. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo was the first master of Bernardino Betti, called Pinturicchio (or Pintoricchio, the little painter), a Perugian by birth. Between the works of Fiorenzo and the earlier examples of Pinturicchio there is all the likeness naturally found between master and scholar. But here we come into contact with Perugino, for, on the return of that master from Florence in 1470, Pinturicchio became his pupil, and soon so thoroughly adopted his manner as at one time to lead to mistakes between their respective works. Raphael now enters on the scene.

The account given by Vasari informs us

that the young boy was brought to Perugino by his father, who entrusted him in person to the teaching of that painter. And, not content with thus proving the tender age at which Raphael commenced his labours, he tries to heighten the effect, and dwells upon the bitter tears which this parting from her boy, who at her death was only eight years old, cost his mother. Subsequent writers accordingly, perceiving the improbability of this arrangement, have endeavoured to compromise the matter by admitting that the father did not place him with Perugino, but, nevertheless, that the son entered the school of that painter in 1495, namely, when he was twelve. The answer to all this is found in the history of Perugino himself, which proves that between the years 1493 and 1498 that master was only resident in Perugia for short periods. In 1494 he was painting in Cremona; in the same year he was in Venice; in 1496 he was again long in Venice; in the autumn of the same year he was in Florence, inhabiting a house of his

own; in 1497 he must have resided some time in Fano, and in 1498 he was again in Florence. But towards the end of 1499 and the beginning of 1500 Perugino was in Perugia, where he completed his large signed and dated picture for the church at Vallambrosa. According to a document reported to have been lately discovered at Perugia, but not seen and therefore not confirmed by Lermolieff, Raphael is stated to have been entered as an assistant in Perugino's studio towards the end of 1499; and this is a surmise at which Rumohr, the most intelligent connoisseur of the beginning of this century, also arrived. By that time Raphael was past sixteen, an age at which the great Italian painters had usually conquered the first difficulties of art. It remains, therefore, to be inquired where his first 'prentice years were passed.

And here another painter joins the story. It is known by various documents that between Raphael and Timoteo Viti, a native of Urbino, a most tender friendship existed.

This friendship has been twisted by Vasari into a proof that Timoteo, who was the scholar of Francia at Bologna, became afterwards the scholar of Raphael. We must listen to a few words characteristic of Vasari on this point: 'Timoteo, during his apprenticeship at Bologna' (namely, between 1490 and 1495), 'adopted a charming manner, exceedingly like that of the new Apelles, his compatriot' (then from seven to twelve years of age!), 'although he had at best seen but few things by his hand in Bologna.' It may be here remarked that no works by Raphael existed in Bologna till the 'St. Cecilia' was executed in 1516, and the 'Vision of Ezekiel' in 1517, or according to some in 1510. Then follows a rambling account of Raphael's being so struck with the youthful promise of Timoteo (who was fifteen years his senior) that he invited him to Rome, where Timoteo reaped considerable pay by assisting Raphael in the 'Sibyls' in S. Maria della Pace; but that an invincible *mal de pays* drove him back to Urbino, where

he soon married, and whence, in spite of Raphael's repeated invitations, he could not be induced to visit Rome again. The answer to all this is that Raphael executed the 'Sibyls' in the Pace in 1518, Timoteo Viti being then fifty years of age; that Timoteo married in 1501; that he belonged to a wealthy family in Urbino, and therefore could have had no inducement on the score of pay to attend Raphael, in his latter years, as an assistant; that in 1513 he filled the office of chief magistrate in Urbino; and that in 1518, instead of helping Raphael in Rome, he was in the employment of the Duke at Urbino.

In all this rigmarole of inaccuracy—a too faithful type of much of Vasari's writing—there is but one part true, namely, that Timoteo Viti's feeling for art closely resembled that which Raphael, fifteen years his junior, subsequently developed. So close was this resemblance that early works by Timoteo have been pronounced by competent judges to be by Raphael, and unless

disproved by documentary evidence, will doubtless continue to be so thought.[1] There is nothing more obvious in the history of art than that certain tendencies in form and feeling belonged to certain races.

The literature of Italy, from various causes, never developed a popular form and expression. On the other hand, nothing hindered the marvellous development of Italian art. Nor can the deep feature-lines of race ever be effaced. Germans and Flemings lived at Rome, and adopted Italian mediums and technical systems, and studied from Italian models; but, as Lermollieff says, no German or Fleming ever hid his nationality behind those systems. Art was as a popular dialect in Italy, distinguishing one province and even one town from another.

[1] As one instance we may cite the picture of the Madonna, enthroned with SS. Crescentius and Vitalis (Lermollieff gives a woodcut of the last saint) in the Brera, which long passed under the name of Raphael. And, as another instance, we have Mr. Morris Moore's so-called Raphael ('Apollo and Marsyas') attributed by Dr. Waagen to Timoteo Viti, believed by the Commendatore Morelli to be an early Perugino, and now purchased by the Louvre at a high price, as a Raphael.

Urbino, like any other city, had its native tendency in art; and Timoteo Viti, like Raphael, was an Urbinese. There is nothing unreasonable, therefore, in the belief that, proceeding from the same race, Timoteo should have anticipated Raphael in that form of grace and sweetness which we call Raffaelesque. Lotto, as Lermollieff points out, was Correggiesque before Correggio—Timoteo evidently Raffaelesque before Raphael. And this leads us to the conclusion arrived at by Ivan Lermollieff, namely, that a gifted artist, in his twenty-seventh year, just issued from the *atelier* of so great a painter as Francia, and returning to his native town in 1495—a fact known by an entry in Francia's journal—instead of having been the pupil and imitator, and still less the assistant, of a boy of twelve, was doubtless *his master*. In this fact we account for a similarity in various details—forms of hands and feet, oval of face, and other signs of that relationship naturally existing between master and scholar which is traceable between Raphael's earliest known

works, as may be seen in the 'Dream of the Knight' in the National Gallery, and those of Timoteo Viti.

It would be a mistake to imagine that Raphael's art was of that distinctive and pronounced character which marks the subjective painter. His mind reflected no such peculiarities on his panel as are seen, for instance, in such men as Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, Mantegna, and others. Nothing approaching the fantastic or the caricatured ever proceeded from his hand. His qualities were rather of that harmonious class which move by a natural law towards perfection. His originality, as distinguished from other artists, was, as has been defined, his excellence. Far from being strongly individual in bias, the peculiar receptiveness of his nature inclined him to adopt even too easily the manner of a new master. We have seen that the young lad first entered the school of Perugino at the close of 1499, where the instruction he received soon bore its fruits. His earliest picture of importance—the

'Crucifixion' at Lord Dudley's, dated 1501, which is altogether Peruginesque — shows how readily he followed a new influence, for not a trace of Timoteo Viti remains. This was succeeded by the 'Coronation of the Virgin,' now in the Vatican, which for years was attributed to Perugino. Had Raphael remained as long under Perugino as has been believed, he would, Lermollieff thinks, have become so imbued with that painter's manner as to have found difficulty in throwing it off. It is evident, however, that the lad only remained about two and a half years in Perugia, his master having removed to Florence in October 1502, whence he proceeded to his birthplace, Città della Pieve.

In the spring of 1504 Raphael returned to his native place, where he executed for the Duke the small pictures of St. George and St. Michael now in the Louvre. Left thus to himself, we have, in the small Costabile (Staffa) Madonna (now in St. Petersburg), the evidence of his own dawning sweetness,

while a little later he is seen in some respects returning to the manner of Timoteo Viti. This is discernible to the connoisseur's eye in his beautiful picture of the Sposalizii, which, though formed on Perugino's composition of the same subject (now in Caen), goes back to the lighter carnations and to the form of hand (see Virgin's left hand) proper to Timoteo. In the autumn of the same year (1504) Raphael visited Florence for the first time. Here the works of Leonardo and of Michael Angelo acted powerfully upon him. Pen drawings by his hand after Leonardo's 'Battle of the Standard' and a study of Michael Angelo's 'David' are preserved. The exquisite portrait of Margaretta Doni in the Pitti by him confesses also the influence of Leonardo's 'Mona Lisa,' only giving the impression of greater harmony and ease in execution.

And, again, it would be a mistake to imagine that our young artist was as independent in his compositions as every modern painter, of whatever country, now is.

The study of the drawings of the old masters by a practised eye—declared by the enthusiastic Lermollieff to be 'one of the purest enjoyments granted to mankind on earth'—is now, thanks to photography, become as ready as it is an indispensable assistance in the education of a connoisseur. This has brought to light the fact how little the quality of originality, in our modern sense, was understood by the Italian masters; in which respect they stood nearer to the Greeks than to us. In the guilds of art the interchange of ideas and subjects was a matter of general etiquette, if not of custom. It seems even to have been a usual sign of deference on the part of a young painter to adopt for his proposed picture the design and sometimes the cartoon of an older master. For instance, we find that the composition of the 'Madonna and Child, with SS. Jerome and Francis,' executed by Raphael either in Perugino's studio or immediately after leaving it, was taken from a delicate pen drawing by Pinturicchio, preserved in the

Albertina at Vienna; that his Staffa Madonna owes its composition to a drawing by Perugino; while from the same reason a Peruginesque figure is here and there detected in works by Pinturicchio. By these means the distinctive signs of certain great contemporary painters are sometimes found interlaced in each other's works—an anomaly only discovered by a knowledge of their respective drawings.

As regards, however, designs by one master and execution by another, it is time to banish a story which reverses the order of nature in this respect, and describes a celebrated artist as receiving designs for a great work from one a full generation his junior. The long-repeated statement that Raphael supplied the designs and cartoons for Pinturicchio's frescoes, and even the execution of one fresco, in the Libreria at Siena, was founded on Vasari's authority, and on what Lermollieff calls the pure invention of Sienese municipal vanity. Passavant demurs about the cartoons, and re-

pudiates all sign of Raphael's hand in the particular fresco, but he gives currency to the assertion that he furnished the designs. All this Lermollieff knocks unhesitatingly on the head. We need not trouble our readers with his proofs, in which his usual care is traceable. It is enough to quote his words :—

'Is it not almost laughable to suppose that a master, already grown grey in his art—the former Court painter to Pope Alexander VI.—should have permitted a lad of twenty—thirty years his junior—to supply him with the compositions for so great a work as the frescoes in the Libreria of the Cathedral of Siena ?[1] As to Vasari's tale, it breaks down of course under investigation. For he adds that Raphael refused to continue helping Pinturicchio at Siena because of his anxiety to get to Florence, whence the fame of the great cartoons by Leonardo da

[1] A history of Siena by Sigismondo Tizio, written in the sixteenth century, and treating copiously of the artists who worked there, is altogether silent about Raphael. See Passavant, vol. i., p. 72

Vinci and Michael Angelo had reached him. Now it is known that, granting him to have been in Siena at all, which is not proved, and, again, granting him to have been in Florence in the autumn of 1504,[1] Michael Angelo's so-called cartoon of Pisa was not finished till 1506.'

The only apparent link that can be traced between Raphael and Siena consists in a small and mutilated antique group of the 'Three Graces,' formerly in the Liberia, and lately removed to the Sienese Academy, and supposed to have furnished the subject for the picture by him now in the possession of Earl Dudley. A drawing of this group in the Venetian Academy, long imputed to Raphael, is now on competent evidence given to Pinturicchio. Whether, therefore,

[1] Doubt has been thrown upon the genuineness of the letter from Giovanni della Rovere to Pietro Soderini, dated October 1, 1504, invoking his protection for the young Urbinese painter, which has hitherto supplied the evidence for Raphael's visit to Florence at that time. Both Müntz and Crowe and Cavalcaselle state this doubt with regret, but do not remove it. It exemplifies the difficulty, met with at every turn, of framing a reliable outline of Raphael's early movements.

Raphael took the main composition of his small picture from this drawing or from the marble is uncertain. At the same time, another, though, it may be added, still uncertain link, is supplied by an Academy study by Raphael, of four youthful male figures, all drawn from the same model, in the Oxford Collection (Catalogue No. 14.). The appearance of the same youth in one of the frescoes in the Libreria, would imply either that Pinturicchio had taken the same model, or adopted the figure from Raphael's drawing.

To Pinturicchio also must henceforth be assigned the greater part of those drawings at Venice, well known by photographs, which go by the name of 'Raphael's Sketchbook.' A rose by any name will smell as sweet, and no change of authorship can affect the charm of certain youthful heads, male and female, contained in this collection, of which we must here give a short history. Early in this century, a Milanese painter, by name Giuseppe Bossi, purchased a bundle of drawings, fifty-three in number, for the sum of about

20*l.*, from a lady residing in Parma. They were all of the same size, and had evidently formed a book, which, carried probably for years in the waistband, or in the pocket, showed signs of wear and injury. Bossi was professor to the Milanese Academy, and a known collector of drawings by the old masters. On inspecting his treasure closely, he pronounced them to be, with the exception of three or four, by the hand of the great master himself; and christened them at once with the fascinating name of 'Raphael's Sketchbook.' At Bossi's death Count Cicognara prevailed on the Austrian Government to purchase his entire collection—sketchbook included—which accordingly has remained ever since in the Venetian Academy. These drawings have now been subjected to that species of cross-examination in which Signor Morelli excels, and have been compelled to speak for themselves, independently of all foregone conclusions. The consequence is that one only has confessed to be by the hand of the master; two to be ruined drawings by

Antonio Pollauiolo; others to be copies by the same master from Perugino, Luca Signorelli, Melozzo da Forli, and others; several to be the work of feeble followers of Perugino, and all the rest to be by the hand of Pinturicchio; including of course his own designs for his own frescoes at Siena. This verdict is arrived at equally by their identity in style with acknowledged drawings by Pinturicchio —confirmed by further evidence we shall give —and by their non-identity with those by Raphael; all of which is sufficiently proved. That Pinturicchio should have carried about with him a little volume—the drawings are $6\frac{1}{8}$ inches by $9\frac{1}{2}$—full of his own sketches, and with studies by and from other masters, is quite in keeping with the artist-habits of the time. But so sudden and sweeping an overturn of long-held opinions does not of course pass without protest. Though not directly attacking the new dogma broached by Lermollieff, Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle seem aware that treason is in the air, and come forward with a theory to which

few will subscribe. To their view these are, it is true, not original drawings by Raphael, but copies by him of drawings by Perugino and by the other masters mentioned. Thus they equally maintain it to be 'Raphael's Sketch-book,' only filled with copies, not originals. At the same time it is an indubitable fact that these drawings are directly connected with Perugino; some of the heads—a child, &c.—being traceable in Perugino's supposed fresco of the 'Journey of Moses,' in the Vatican. Original drawings by Raphael they cannot therefore be, were it only on chronological grounds; for the frescoes by Perugino in the Vatican were commenced about 1480, three years before Raphael was born. Nor is the theory that they had been kept in Perugino's pocket for upwards of twenty years before Raphael could copy them more tenable. The young pupil could only have had access to them in his master's studio between 1499 and 1502, when he was from sixteen to nineteen years of age; and it requires but a comparatively slight knowledge

of his drawings at that time to perceive that these firm, broad, and mature pen-strokes are not by a hand which, however promising, was immature. The further argument that the little sheets 'bear the water-mark—a ladder in a circle, surmounted by a star—the same mark as that on other Raphael drawings,'[1] is so easily explained that we can only wonder that Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle should have brought it forward. The simple answer is this; that there was probably but one principal paper factory at that time in Perugia, for the same water-mark is found, not only on the drawings by Raphael, but on those by Perugino and other masters from the Umbrian district. We must do Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle the justice to add that, while urging their copy-theory, they admit that no trace has survived of the supposed originals.

Still, we have not quite done with this controversy; which has rested on a deeper

[1] *Raphael: His Life and Works*, by Crowe and Cavalcassele, p. 52, *note*.

foundation than had been supposed. Among those frescoes in the Sistine Chapel which survived the destruction occasioned by clearing a space for Michael Angelo's 'Last Judgment,' are the 'Baptism,' adjudged to Perugino, and the opposite picture, the 'Journey of Moses,' to Luca Signorelli. Modern knowledge had, however, thrown a doubt on the authorship of the last-named; and Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle in their pages on Perugino settled the matter by pronouncing the 'Journey of Moses' to be also by him. At all events, the counterparts of the beautiful female heads in the sketchbook are traced in this fresco (in the picture of the 'Sposalizii' they have no existence). But here Lermollieff interposes with what we may call his 'second sight,' and piles reason upon reason to prove that the frescoes themselves are not by Perugino at all, but both by Pinturicchio. The faults and the merits alike are those of the younger man; in both subjects the composition is crowded—a fault common in Pinturicchio, unknown in Perugino; the

beautiful landscape, with its cypresses, and palms, and masses of rock, derived from Benozzo, belongs also to Pinturicchio and not to Perugino; the children are like those in Pinturicchio's known works, and as distinct as possible from Perugino's ugly, aldermanic little beings, 'with their round baggy stomachs;' and even a flight of small birds in the air, pursued by a falcon, is an incident seen in the frescoes of the Libreria. Against such evidence no candid connoisseur will raise a doubt, and we may safely admit it in favour of a beautiful painter and draftsman long deprived by the prejudice of Vasari of his due place in the history of art. The right adjustment also of the contents of the sketchbook rectifies an anomaly which had been remarked —namely, the strange rarity of drawings by Pinturicchio. Thus, two very obstinate errors—the one as old as Vasari, the other nearer our time—namely, that Raphael supplied the designs for the frescoes in the Libreria, and that he was the author of the chief contents of the so-called 'Sketchbook,'

may be considered as refuted, and the arguments in their favour dismissed to swell the endless proofs of the fruitfulness of a wrong hypothesis.

After pursuing the close reasoning of Signor Morelli as he cautiously follows the trail of a great master, the pages of Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle sound like a work of the imagination. Instead of arriving at carefully worked out conclusions, we find ourselves in a region of incessant surmises, and wander leisurely in a land of perpetual 'perhaps.' We are invited to accompany the painter in a series of conjectural journeys and supposititious visits; to consider what he may 'possibly' have thought, or 'not impossibly' have done; what he may 'probably' have planned, or 'not improbably' have let alone. It is impossible now, at this distance of time, in the absence of all documentary evidence, to determine the various short journeys taken by a young and comparatively unknown artist in an obscure part of Italy. Nor do these surmises in any way assist the

real question of authorship. In the nature of things there is no absolute demonstration feasible in settling the parentage of a work of art. There is no experiment by which it can be verified, no sum total by which it can be proved. It is easier with Whately to show that no such person as Napoleon Buonaparte ever existed, than to prove the picture before us to be really the work of one born just 400 years ago. All eye-witnesses are gone with him—the almost only contemporary writer on the subject is proved to be as often as not a liar. Contracts may survive, but who knows that he, and not another, fulfilled them—signatures go for nothing—taste is proverbially a quality on which mankind cannot agree. Even the consent of ages may be set aside. People, for instance, are trying to persuade themselves that Shakspeare's Plays were written by Lord Bacon; and, in point of fact, the celebrated 'Fornarina' by Raphael in the tribune of the Uffizi is now known to be neither the 'Fornarina,' nor by him. Still, there is that thing called

moral conviction,' stronger than any argument that can be brought against it which would induce our Government (we hope), 'with the hearty consent of all the *élite* of the nation, to give many thousands for the Sistine 'Madonna,' or even for the Blenheim Raphael, if either were in the market.

We here take occasion to refute a theory entertained by Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, but, for a very good reason, not even touched upon by Lermollieff—namely, that a painter called Justus of Ghent, who executed a picture for Federigo of Montefeltro, still existing in S. Agata in Urbino, 'probably' exercised considerable influence over the rising taste of Raphael, though, from jealousy of a foreigner's talent, his name was omitted in the chronicle of contemporary artists by Gio. Santi, already mentioned. This picture, in all recent artist biography, has been the subject of stereotyped eulogy. Kugler, in his first edition of 'Italian Painters,' and Passavant and Waagen in various places, have dwelt upon the merits of this, the sole

surviving specimen of the supposed great scholar of Hubert van Eyck; but, while unanimous in this respect, they equally agreed in another, *i.e.* in never having actually seen the picture in question. This delusion continued till a late eminent painter and connoisseur visited Urbino, when the whole structure of laudation fell to the ground. We give an extract from his careful notes :—

'Justus van Ghent.—The apostles receiving the Eucharist from Christ. Architecture, behind, incomprehensible, and without intelligible perspective. The execution, seen near, quite without knowledge; the drawing execrable; the heads below criticism. The painter was quite unworthy to be admitted among those in Urbino who must have been his contemporaries; and there is not even a single particular—not even architecture, or still life—in which he can be said to have influenced the Italians.'[1]

We need no longer feel surprised, as many have expressed, that Gio. Santi should

[1] Notebook of Sir Charles Eastlake, September 26, 1858.

not have noticed this barbarous representative of Flemish art; but all suspicion of jealousy should have been excluded by the praise bestowed by him upon 'il gran Joannes'—Jan van Eyck.

Altogether, Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle are strangely at fault when dealing with some of the painters who flourished on the Adriatic coast, and in no respect more so than in tracing resemblances and influences between Gio. Santi and that fine artist—powerful, rugged, and original—Melozzo da Forlì, the first great foreshortener, whose name and few works have only recently emerged into light. So utterly opposite are the two, the one feeble and prettyish, the other grandly ugly and strong, that we might just as well endeavour to trace the influence of 'L. E. L.' upon Robert Browning, or the reverse.

And now, having shown the careful grounds on which Lermollieff has dismissed the chief tales which have encumbered the youthful history of Raphael, and thus pro-

vided a safer basis for a future biographer, we turn to the more pleasing inspection of that art, which, as taste and knowledge increase, must command ever higher and higher admiration.

While giving fresh grace, truth, and grandeur to almost every subject that art can represent, there are three forms in which the great Umbrian master stands especially unrivalled—his Madonnas and Holy Families, his Vatican frescoes, and his cartoons. Raphael has been called the creator of the Madonna and Child. He was rather the restorer of both to their genuine human nature. They had existed in an abstract form since the date of the Renaissance, which they had, indeed, inaugurated; but in a form so stiff, dark, and unnatural that we fail to discern what it was that excited the enthusiasm of the people as described by Vasari. The Quattrocentisti humanised both Mother and Child, though without departing from the strict devotional type. They still continued formal, as with Perugino; mournful,

as with Botticelli; and holy and unemotional as with Bellini. Some of them, it is true, exquisitely beautiful, and most of them devout; but not the expression of pure nature.

The Renaissance sculptors went a step further than the painters; and Ghiberti, Luca della Robbia, and Rossellini have actions which herald the approach of the true infantine idea. Still, there was no relaxation of the prescribed distance between the Mother and Child. Her attitude is generally adoration—his, benediction. Till Raphael's time the Virgin was not the mother, nor Christ the child. He first revealed the world of feeling and endearment between them, and opened that fount of beauty which, if less orthodox in the sense of dogma, is more sacred in that of Nature. We are not called upon to say which idea is to be preferred, the ecclesiastical or the natural; whether M. Rio be right or wrong in lamenting the painter's departure from the Umbrian traditions. Our aim is only to explain that which Raphael's

art alone has vindicated. Few painters—perhaps no other painter—could, with impunity, have cast off the conventional symbols of sanctity; for no other possessed ideas so pure and beautiful to put in their place. Not that there was such room for the expansion of the idea of maturity as for that of childhood. Earthly mothers have always adored their babes, and always will. Though the direct action, therefore, is suppressed, the feeling is still there. Raphael's Madonnas are young, loving, and virginal—a book of prayers alone dividing, or having divided, their attention from the Infant. Still, in the nature of the subject, they are confined within a limited sphere of expression. The type of face is over-regular and monotonous. The eyebrows are a slender line, the forehead high—both, in obedience to the fashion of the day, the result of art. In most instances the eyes of the mother are cast down upon the babe, thus detracting much from the light and expression of her face. To this rule the Madonna della Seggiola and the Sistine

Madonna are almost the only exceptions, and to this, in part, may be attributed the higher charm they present.

It was the child who especially gained under Raphael's new treatment. In his hands the supreme idea was raised rather than lowered, for, instead of quenching the natural in the divine, he sought and expressed the divine in the natural. His aim was to vindicate the holiness of Nature in that person of 'a little child' which has been given to all for imitation; and which, as long as this world continues, will remain the most direct revelation of purity and innocence vouchsafed to the human race. He knew that a beautiful and healthy babe, unlike most men and women, needs no idealising;—that there were moments when the expression of an unconscious child, 'over whom his immortality broods like the day,' realises all a painter can image of the Godlike and apart.

In the first place Raphael's fine perception of Nature told him that a child of a year old, which is about the age at which the Infant

Saviour is portrayed, will hardly lie motionless, whether to be adored or painted. By the same feeling his children are never doing anything unchildlike. They play with flower or bird—the last a cruel amusement still given to children in Italy—but they take no notice of the grand or grim saints who stand around, often with their backs to them. The pretty little farce also of the mystic marriage with the Alexandrian or Sienese bride, never appeared within the range of Raphael's subjects; nor, with two exceptions—the Madonna of the 'Divin' Amore' at Naples, and the early picture executed for the nuns of S. Antonio—do we remember an instance in which the Child is giving the benediction. On the other hand, there is no mood or action known to the fondest of young mothers which he has not caught, living as it rose. There are the little hungry ones who pull at the mother's dress in front to claim their meal; as in the smaller Orleans picture, in the Colonna Madonna at Berlin, and in the Niccolini Madonna at Panshanger; the last-

named even with an impatient and fractious expression. There are those who cling to the mother's breast, as they shrink from the old St. Elizabeth, or some other object, as in the 'Impannata.' There is the child who raises his arms to his mother 'to be taken up' as he awakes from sleep. There is the grasping at the reed cross held by St. John, but only as a child reaches naturally at a stick in the hand of another, as in the Alba Madonna. There is the struggle of the chubby, fat, and beautiful babe, all intent on giving a flower to the little Baptist, as in the Garvagh Raphael in the National Gallery. There is the little fondling pressing his cheek to that of his mother, in the Tempi picture at Munich. There is the serious, large-eyed, ruminant babe—his hand buried in his mother's breast; one foot curled up in perfect physical enjoyment, as in the Madonna della Seggiola; and there is, finally, the grand rapt creature, with the solemn far-off look into futurity, who rests royally in the arms of the Sistine Madonna.

The introduction of the little Baptist was a great assistance in the sense of art in a composition of two figures only, and yet he sometimes detracts from the harmony of the piece. His part is to amuse or to adore the Infant Christ; and though his kneeling position and intense expression of veneration has bequeathed to us some of the most beautiful figures—for instance, in the Belle Jardinière—that art ever created, yet there is a want of moral keeping between the humble attitude of the one child, and the sweet unconsciousness of superiority in the other, which sometimes jars on the mind. In the Madonna della Seggiola the little adoring head and clasped hands, seen in the dark behind, are even *de trop*; while in some larger groups, such as the 'Impannata,' and the Madonna of Francis I., the painter was evidently embarrassed how to bring him in.

It may be wondered how Raphael, a young and over-employed man, to whom the ties of marriage and paternity were unknown, should have found time and opportunity to

study what we find only in the privacy of the nursery. But the climate of Italy and the habits of the lower orders give ceaseless occasion to observe what he needed. Every Italian town is one vast nursery itself. The young mother sits with her nursling on the doorstep, or lounges in the shade of a portico; all the little endearments, and various other matters, going on unrestrained in public. Raphael's marvellous power of observation, that power which was perpetually adding to the stores on which his fancy lived, was thus ceaselessly fed by actions and expressions which no one but the artist notices; many a passing group, long turned to dust, becoming thus the unconscious seed of a conception which will live for ever.

Various were thus the sources whence these compositions must have been gathered. Few are so obvious as that which suggested the Sistine Madonna, which, with its curtains drawn back, and the staging on which the figures stand concealed by the clouds, shows the machinery of the Sacred Play. This may

help to account for the fact that no studies or sketches of any kind for this picture are found. One immortal feature—namely, the little boy angels resting on the parapet below—was an after-thought of the painter; for through them are seen the forms of the clouds over which they were executed.

The frescoes by Raphael in the Vatican, known as the 'Stanze,' owed their existence to causes which at this day add but little to their interest. They keep their place with ever-increasing fame, but the patronage that invoked them commands less respect the more it is investigated. The Popes and Princes of that time lived in dreams of classic revivals; each in his own estimation a Pericles or a Mæcenas; a train of needy painters and sonneteers forming a regular part of their worldly pomp. The infamous Borgia was dead, and had been succeeded by one of the most imperious and self-willed of men, Julius II., who professed to know more of war than of literature, and certainly knew more of war than of art. But art and literature were the

fashion, and he had the merit of stimulating the highest exertions of the two greatest artists of modern times. The work they did was glorious, but its true history presents a page of mingled vanity, temper, and ignorance, which the shade of Michael Angelo would readily endorse. That great soul chafed under a despotic and capricious patronage, devoid of all real respect for art. On the young Raphael, just twenty-five years of age, and formed by nature to sail more smoothly both up and down life's stream, these conditions weighed less heavily. Rome was then the goal of every man's ambition, from the courtier to the artist, and Raphael combined the two. Julius II. had at all events the merit of abominating his predecessor. He would not even inhabit the rooms which Borgia had occupied, but chose the story above them for his residence. This apartment contained what are now known as the Camera della Segnatura, the Stanze of the Heliodorus and del Incendio, and the Sala di Costantino; the walls of which all bear the

imperishable stamp of Raphael's genius, and some of them that of his hand also. The subjects of the Segnatura have been the topic of endless conjectures as to the precise meaning of the abstract ideas, supposed to be the Triumph of the Church and the Glorification of Rome, intended to be conveyed. These speculations will not interest us now, further than to remind the reader that it is the crucial test of genius to lend itself to symbolic and learned themes, and not to swamp the art beneath the weight of erudition. The subjects implied by the titles of the three principal frescoes in the Segnatura—namely, Theology, Poetry, and Philosophy—would have overpowered almost any other man, and to Raphael belongs the almost unique glory of having opened sources of interest to the scholar scarcely less fascinating than those presented to the connoisseur. That Raphael possessed the learning and research displayed by such a subject as the 'School of Athens,' would be a very false conclusion. Rome abounded with new editions of classic authors,

and with ardent expounders of them. Many of these last were friends of Raphael, and vied with each other in supplying him with information regarding the representative individuals of certain schools and habits of thought, and the proper accessories belonging to them. We may even doubt, for instance, whether Raphael, unassisted, would have placed the volumes of 'Ethics' (so inscribed) in the hand of Aristotle; but all his learned friends put together could not have helped him one stroke in the conception of the characters they marshalled before him. It is easy to imagine what a mass of unpractical pedantry, supplied by such friends as the authors of the 'Cortigiano' and 'gli Asolani,' the painter had to filter and boil down before extracting the materials fitted for his use. The general public at best are peculiarly at fault as to what ideas are translatable into art; and the Italian public at that time, as may be gathered from their literature, were even more ignorant than we are now.

It was the observation of one, himself a

scholar, who combined the philosophy of art with its practice, that 'the history which a picture pretends to represent—whatever it may be—is in reality a far truer mirror of the age when it was executed.' This is singularly illustrative of these frescoes, in which the feeling of the sixteenth century peeps through all classic and spiritual allusion. The very name of the 'Disputa,' originally given to the Theology, refers to those mutterings of the Reformation, and especially to the controversy on the Real Presence, which were already heard from afar. The chief features of this fresco, the 'Host and Altar,' round which the sacred hierarchy above and below are grouped, were the prominent points of dispute But however traditional the main forms to which he has adhered, the painter has his own innovations and alterations. No one ever treated the signs of the Evangelists —the lion, ox, and eagle—so sublimely as he has done in the 'Vision of Ezekiel;' but instead of expanding the subject to the dimensions of reality, he limited it to a small cabinet

size. The reason is obvious. He could put the noblest expression into the person of the Almighty, however small the scale, but no power of expression could have redeemed the brute weight of these huge animals, had they been given the size of life. Accordingly the Evangelists are typified in the fresco of the 'Disputa' by four beautiful winged boys, each holding a book of the Gospels.

It is evident that this work cost Raphael great thought, for at least thirty preliminary studies for it exist. A letter from him also to Ariosto is extant, asking advice as to the selection of the sacred personages seated below. And we see perhaps the answering suggestions of the poet, as well as certain dominant opinions, both in those omitted and in those introduced. Saints Francis and Domenic, hitherto the unfailing features in sacred assemblies, had gone out of fashion; while not only the figure of Dante as the author of the 'Divina Commedia' is seen among fathers, doctors, popes, and prelates, but also that of Savonarola, whose introduc-

tion among the elect on earth, on the walls of the very palace of the popes, shows not only how his teaching was viewed, but also gives some measure of Julius's hatred of the man under whom the great Dominican had suffered martyrdom as late as 1498. This fresco, as it was the last grand representation in which the long descended dogmatic forms, applied indifferently to the 'Last Judgment,' to the 'Coronation of the Virgin,' and, as here, to the 'Triumph of the Church,' were symbolised, so it was the first to be combined with forms of art, perfect equally in the expression of the highest naturalism and the purest ideality. The art of Raphael had reached that climax which combined the two. The 'Disputa' portrayed the wisdom inspired by Revelation; the 'School of Athens,' the knowledge developed without it. No forms of triune Divinity here, or seraphim 'in burning row;' but unassisted man, groping his way by himself and intent on teaching and learning some new thing. No painter had before attempted to unite in one great whole the various schools

of Greek sages and philosophers. The very attempt was the reflexion of a time when the whole learning of Italy was devoted to their study; while few things are more interesting than to trace the skill with which Raphael so grouped them, that all who run may read. The figures of Plato and Aristotle, the great dividers of the intellectual world, standing side by side on the highest level, in a hall of unexampled architectural beauty, at once head the composition. Plato, the representative of the Academy, the successor of Socrates in the search of moral truth, is pointing to heaven as the seat of his contemplation; Aristotle, the representative of the Lyceum, and the explorer of the secrets of physical nature, is indicating with level hand the surface of the earth. Again, Plato is given as a venerable man, with an expression of fervour in keeping with his sublimer aspirations; while Aristotle turns towards him with the calmer expression of a practical and positive reasoner. So far the larger ideas thus translated into art are intelligible to most minds;

but when we come to the more erudite facts, that the name of Plato was expressive of a broad-shouldered man, and that the ancient statues of the Stagyrite showed him with only the right arm free, we feel these to be minutiæ interesting to very few, and which the painter was free to take or to leave. Accordingly, the shoulders of Plato are not made particularly broad, and if he gave Aristotle with his left arm covered with drapery to the wrist, the probability was that he needed the larger mass in the outline of the figure. Art and history play equally together in the intent and dramatic groups which surround Pythagoras and Archimedes on the right and left, as well as in the figure of Diogenes, who, sprawling alone on the steps, at once conveys the impression of his cynicism, and helps to vary the composition. Such variations, little as they may be suspected by the general spectator, were *de rigueur* to the eye of the painter. Hence we find them contrived wherever he felt their introduction desirable. This is the case with a figure in the group of

Socrates, giving orders with animated gesture to a slave, nude to the waist, who carries books; and the same with a youthful figure propped up against the plinth, to the left of Aristotle, and almost bent double as, with his legs crossed, he writes in the tablets on his knee. There is something in this youth which recalls the graceful action of the disappointed suitor breaking his rod in the Spozalizii; introduced there, of course, for the painter's same reason, that of varying the composition. Nor would Raphael have been true to himself had he not managed to smuggle in the head of a beautiful child, who is seen on one side carried by an old man. The *savants* explain this by the custom of bringing children into the ancient schools, so as to habituate them to silence and to direct them to study; but any reason, we may be sure, would have contented the painter. This fresco is the triumph of art, properly so called, elucidating every principle by which a tale can be best told, and the interest of the spectator led, as by an electric current, from

group to group. One important reason for this success, too little observed in modern pictures of assemblies of men, but contributing marvellously to the concentrated interest of the work, is that no one is conscious of the spectator. It is true the heads of Perugino and Raphael are seen in one corner on the extreme left; Bramante also, the uncle of Raphael, is said to be represented under the features of Archimedes; and doubtless other heads then living have left their portraits in this scene. But no one invokes our attention, except the figure of a young man of conspicuous beauty, who, standing above the group of Pythagoras, alone (excepting the child) catches our eye. He is said to represent Francesco Maria della Rovere, adopted son of his uncle, Guidobaldo of Urbino, and nephew of Julius, who stands thus prominently as proxy for the Pope himself. As the Roman Church had borrowed many a feature from the Pantheon, so, on the appearance of this fresco, the compliment was returned; for the common Roman people easily

recognised the figures of Plato and Aristotle as those of SS. Peter and Paul.

We have no space to enter into the glories of the other works in the Vatican, all of which were from his own designs though not all by his hand. The popularity of these frescoes may be judged by the numerous forms in which they are represented in the Royal Windsor Library—the 'Disputa' in 131 forms, the 'School of Athens' in 136.

It is enough to say that they contain figures unequalled, before or since, in beauty and appropriateness of expression. It is true that those frescoes executed by his scholars from his designs fall far short of the merit of those in the Camera della Segnatura. But Raphael's conceptions may be compared in the indestructible fitness of their structure to Handel's grandest themes, which, so long as time and tune are kept, may be strummed by any schoolgirl without destroying their simple charms.

It is the fashion to apportion the course

of this great painter into three distinct periods —his Umbrian, terminating in 1504; his Florentine, 1508; and his Roman, with his death in 1520. These divisions appear to us very fanciful; or, if they did exist, they slid into each other without sign of separation or join,[1] like the supposed quarters of the moon; and, like her, also waxing gradually into a complete and more luminous whole. Raphael never halted or recommenced, but ran one consecutive race, each footstep taking up where the previous one left off, only one step in advance. He passed, as Nature does, from less to more, but never from one style to another. The basis of all his character, his inward life, that perception of beauty 'which was to him as a sixth sense,'[2] was Umbrian. From that he never departed. It may be traced in his finest dramatic action and most developed forms; never allowing him to transgress the laws of Nature and of pure taste, or what we may term the limit of

[1] Dennistoun's *Dukes of Urbino*, vol ii., p. 217.
[2] *Ibid.*

a certain reserve of power. He was full in his art, as never man was before—the representative beyond every other painter of the whole art of the Renaissance—but equal in all parts of his fulness. He practised every quality, and carried all on, *pari passu*, to perfection; so that no one was at the expense of another. Even in that quality which one would impute rather to a Rubens than to a Raphael, that of rapid motion, he stands higher than any other. Those two angelic beings, with scourges in their hands, who rush forward, light as the air they cleave, yet wingless, by the mysterious horseman's side, to chasten the prostrate Heliodorus, are the most perfect realisation of flight, swift as a passing flash, that modern art has given us. Never was such chastisement conveyed in such a poetic form. Nor, while indicating to the reader such rare and consummate powers, may we omit one of a humbler kind. The execution of Raphael's accessories was on a par with all the rest. The rendering of various stuffs—velvet, silk or damask—as

seen in his portraits, was as perfect as the finest Flemish art; while the musical instruments at the feet of St. Cecilia are as exquisite in tone as other instruments in Holbein's 'Mathematician' in the Louvre.

Even beyond the Vatican frescoes he grasped a higher excellence. The cartoons for the tapestries of the Sistine Chapel speak a finer language still. All superfluous features are eliminated, and his thought is seen stripped—like the finest specimens of Greek sculpture—to the simplest and grandest conditions. They are infinitely finer than the 'Transfiguration,' always conventionally extolled as his *chef d'œuvre*, which was executed under conditions of haste and overwork, the upper part prescribed by tradition, the lower part eked out with what M. Clément calls 'remplissages' (fillings out), and, moreover, difficult to interpret.

We have likened the art of Raphael more than once in this article to Greek sculpture. But there is a wide difference between partaking in the same feeling which inspired the

Greeks, and any attempt at a direct imitation of them. In the same sense that the whole Italian Renaissance was founded, through the art of Byzantium, upon Greek feeling, Raphael was born classic. Without affecting the directly sculpturesque, therefore—which Mantegna of all the Italian painters alone did—his works evince those laws of propriety and taste, and what we have called the sense of the reserve of power, which are the ruling features in Greek art. That he studied the examples around him, collected gems and intaglios, and sent designers to various parts of Italy, and even to Greece, to collect materials, is quite consistent with the conditions of his own originality. Greek art, as the parent of all fine art, is the heritage of every modern artist. Every great Italian painter accordingly drank at that source. The 'Amorini' of Titian, the infants of Francia, as well as of Raphael and others, show the admiration and study of many a Greek gem. He must have been well known for his worship of the antique remains, in

that respect contrasting with Michael Angelo, or he would hardly have been appointed, under Leo X., to superintend their excavation, and act as guardian for their conservation; one of the many offices placed in his latter years on those overcharged shoulders. His official position thus led to his being among the first to inspect the antique pictures discovered in the Baths of Titus (and destroyed in the sack of Rome), the knowledge of which is obvious in his decorations of the Loggie.

Much has been said by Italian writers of the influence of Michael Angelo upon Raphael, and no one has given greater exaggeration to this idea than our own Reynolds, who maintains that 'it is to Michael Angelo that we owe even the existence of Raphael.' Without venturing to discuss so great an authority, we may be permitted to say that at all events no trace of such influence is visible in Raphael's works, nor, in the nature of their respective styles, could be. Never were two men so diametrically opposed,

as well in art as in character. Raphael's powers of receptivity and assimilation were boundless. Michael Angelo had no such power whatever. The Greek torso in the Medici Garden helped to develop his passion for strongly-marked anatomical forms, but it never helped him to understand the antique. Raphael was universal, Michael Angelo one-sided. Raphael wielded all the resources that Nature could give him—the fairest and grandest aspects of the human face and figure, drapery, landscape, architecture; Michael Angelo had no resources but what his profession required; in that profession nothing but the human figure, and in that human figure neither grace, beauty, nor expression; only the grandest energy and power to which modern art has given birth. Raphael, as we have said, represented the whole art of the Renaissance. Michael Angelo stood absolutely alone, great only in the greatest. If, therefore, Michael Angelo created, even as a painter, the finest things in the world, it was because certain subjects lent themselves to

the sculpturesque. The single figures of his 'Prophets and Sibyls' partake closely of the conditions of sculpture. They sit on thrones, needing neither backgrounds nor accessories, and, like the compartments of the Ceiling, with those wondrous figures of Athletes placed at the angles of the coffers, would lose nothing of their grandeur, but even possibly the reverse, if given in relief. We are far, therefore, from saying that Raphael received no influence from his gigantic Florentine compeer. Such a painter receives it from every source and direction; but it would be strange if we could point to any portion of Raphael's works in which that influence has made itself visible. That which falls into the mind of poet or artist passes through that mind, and is given back in a different form.

We have more than once alluded to the real ignorance of art as well as absence of respect for the artist which marked the period of the proudest triumphs of the Renaissance. Certainly, if the neglect and destruction of

the most precious works of genius committed to the guardianship of the Church, and the soulless pedantry of the art-literature of the time be accepted as any index, it is impossible not to conclude that the standard of knowledge and appreciation was curiously low. No one will defend the French spoilers, but they deserve some credit for their appreciation of what they stole. Many a fine work—Raphael's 'Madonna di Foligno,' for instance—owes its present existence to the remedial care bestowed on it in Paris by a first-rate restorer. A few more years of the Roman Church's tender mercies in Italy would have incurably damaged many of the pictures the French carried off; while it is heart-breaking to think how many glorious things, incurably injured, escaped the removal to Paris by not being able to bear the transport. As with the Italian musical composers to the present day, the latest painter in fashion was always the highest in favour, and the tribute most readily paid to a new favourite was to destroy an old one to make room for him. We need

no greater proof of Julius II.'s incapacity to appreciate either Michael Angelo or Raphael than the fact that, with 4,422 rooms in the Vatican at his disposal, he ordered the destruction of the works of such painters as Pietro della Francesca and Perugino in order to make room for them. Nor did the Italian public value what they had obtained at such a sacrilegious cost. The Sistine Ceiling has suffered every injury that smoke and neglect can inflict, while, by the end of the seventeenth century, the frescoes by Raphael were so encrusted with dirt as to be hardly recognisable. We have to thank Carlo Maratti for the skill and care with which he cleaned them. It may be asked how the fame of the artists with such a public came to be established? There is no doubt that it was established by the voices of their own profession, readily echoed by the outside world, and the same occurs among ourselves at the present day much more frequently than we suspect. The fame of most pictures is decided

before the Royal Academy Exhibition opens to the public.

In these cursory remarks on the great painter and his art, it is obvious that no consecutive biography, however slight, has been intended. Nevertheless, the estimate—such as it is—of the artist would not be complete without some estimate of the man. The one is more difficult than the other. Reasoning from the character of his art to that of his mind, Raphael might have been expected to justify the title of 'Il Divino' as much in himself as in his works. But the complex mind of man is generally more affected by the times in which he lives than by any other influence. Those in which Raphael was cast were not favourable to the exhibition of genuine individual character. Where morals are corrupt, manners are sure to be formal and ceremonious, for the safeguards of propriety are all external. The men and women accordingly, in this Augustan period, as is most evident in the literature of the day, all wore masks, and used the insincere and pedantic phrases which were

the current verbal coin of society. Few have the power to stem the tide of their age, whichever way it may set, and, without disrespect to so sublime a genius, Raphael was not of those few. Unlike Michael Angelo, who was always paying the penalty for that, the then rarest of all virtues, the courage of his opinions, Raphael, we may be sure, never offended Pope or Prince by too frank a word. It was not to be expected therefore that the exquisite simplicity and truth of his art could be reflected in his manners. That he was willing and amiable, always ready to help his fellow-artists and juniors—what Vasari calls 'la gentillezza stessa'—need not be doubted; but he would have commanded little success had he not been smooth and conventional, and, in the sense of flattery, hollow. The few letters we know by Raphael contrast unfavourably with those of Michael Angelo. If there be no trace in them of the same turbulent and vehement temper, there is also no sign of the same nobility and independence of soul. Indeed, there is hardly one in which

the younger artist does not show a keen eye for the main business of life. In that worldliness of character which made him equally ready to serve friend and foe he may be better compared to Leonardo da Vinci. His attachment to the ducal family of Montefeltro is much dwelt upon by biographers, yet it did not prevent him, during the time of their misfortunes, from entering the service of those in the pay of their cruel enemy, Cæsar Borgia. Nor will Raphael bear comparison with the great sculptor in intellect. Michael Angelo's sonnets have the stamp of a grand and mournful mind, which has learned by suffering what it taught by song. Raphael's few sonnets do not rise above the commonplace utterances of the day.

Yet there is no doubt that he, like his great compeer, suffered severely from those unreasonable and most exacting proofs of favour showered upon him both by Julius II. and Leo X. He had not, it is true, ultimately to choose between his art and the proposed alliance with a cardinal's niece, for

Maria Bibbiena, who reposes near him in the Pantheon, died opportunely in early youth. Nor had he to choose between his art and the dignity of a cardinal's hat—if that honour were ever seriously contemplated—for they certainly would have been incompatible; but he was not allowed to choose between the dearest instinct of his being and a number of offices—the direction of the works of St. Peter's, the guardianship of antique sculpture and inscriptions, and the cleansing of Rome from the accumulated rubbish of generations —which consumed his time, wore out his strength, and grievously interfered with his high and separate vocation. It is on this account that we find less of the true Raffaelesque in his later works, for which he had to call in the assistance of pupils.

One supposed interruption, which is even charged with the termination of his life and labours, and which, like all evil reports, has tenaciously kept its place, must not be passed over without protest. We quote, therefore, from an article on Passavant's 'Life of

Raphael,' in the 'Quarterly Review' of more than forty years ago, but hitherto unsurpassed, whether in the history or philosophy of art :—

'Passavant treats this idle story of Vasari, respecting the painter's inordinate attachment to the Fornarina—the alleged cause of his death—as it deserves. Earlier biographers make not the slightest allusion to it, and every other circumstance—above all the unsubdued, or rather increased energy of the painter's mind up to the very end of his career—abundantly contradicts the absurd calumny.'[1]

The reader may be surprised to hear that the very name of the Fornarina does not occur in any work till the last century.

Raphael died on the supposed anniversary of his birth—Good Friday, April 6, 1520, and was buried in the Pantheon S. Maria della Rotonda, in a chapel he had himself endowed. For many years the members of St. Luke's Academy had believed themselves

[1] *Quarterly Review*, No. CXXXI., June 1840.

to be in possession of his skull, and various phrenological theories had been formed upon it. Whether influenced by a desire to clear up so strange a claim, as well as to ascertain whether he really lay in the Pantheon, which the Roman antiquaries had begun to doubt, a wish was expressed to search for the remains. Accordingly, leave was obtained from the authorities, and, on September 14, 1833, in the presence of the members of the Academy, and of other bodies, the coffin was discovered in the place indicated by Vasari, under an altar on which stood a marble statue of the Madonna. The skeleton measured about 5 feet 7 inches, and the width of the coffin indicated a very slender frame. The head, as might have been anticipated, was in its right place, the forehead well projecting over the eyes, and with the nobler organs finely and equally developed. The teeth were regular, white and perfect—fourteen in the upper jaw, and fifteen in the lower, and the wisdom teeth just piercing through. We thus arrive at

some outline of the delicate and healthy frame in which so remarkable a being walked among men. Overbeck, the painter, was present at the ceremony of disinterment, and in a letter to a friend describes the emotion with which he watched the proceedings, and the final discovery of the body—adding at once a vain wish and a just sentiment: 'Would that in memory of such a man, some might become worthy to inherit his genius! But that, alas! lies buried much deeper than his bones.'

ALBERT DÜRER

ALBERT DÜRER.

In analysing the career of a great artist we have to consider him from three points of view—his time, his life, and his works. Thus only can that true convergence of focus be obtained by which the man, as in a stereoscope, is made to stand solidly before us. There is nothing so unchanging in her general conditions as Nature. Generation after generation see the same features in hill and dale, wood and stream—in man, woman and child. Yet what more diverse than the impressions of those same objects on different minds! In no respect do nations and men show stronger individuality than in their poetic and pictorial conceptions of the things around them. Each race has its separate

character, each individual his separate handwriting, and all varying further with successive epochs. To search into the causes for such phenomena would be a fruitless task, for they are inseparable from the First Cause of all things. The principle of distinctness—that difference between one being and another, which we call individuality—runs through all creation, and is as divine as creation itself. And even when man, in his puny way, creates, the same divine attribute of distinctness follows, for only machines, or men degraded to machines, can strictly repeat.

And granting we do obtain that stereoscopic view of an artist to which we have alluded, we are as far as ever from understanding the connexion between himself and his particular art, for that again proceeds from those depths of our being before which we stand without an answer. As Napoléon said when asked the origin of his novel tactics, 'Je n'en sais rien, je suis fait comme ça.' So the reasons that made the art of a

Leonardo different to that of a Rubens elude all scrutiny. Each was so made.

Still, there remain abundant causes, moral and historical, which affect the career of a painter, and therefore his art. The peculiar tendency of his thought, the steadfast excellence of his hand they cannot touch, for these are his own: but they dictate the class of subject, they restrict the range of expression, and confine him within limits which it is his business to turn to account as best he may.

The state of Europe, abstractedly viewed, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, would not have been considered conducive to the arts of peace. Those who are inclined to attribute the marvellous efflorescence of art at that time to the patronage and discrimination of popes and emperors, princes and potentates, are met by facts in history not encouraging to such a theory. On the contrary, could the arts have been frightened, intimidated, or disheartened, they would certainly not have taken up their abode in the Italy of that day, and would have

avoided Germany altogether. The treacheries, basenesses, and ignorance of those who are supposed to have been their patrons are graven on the history of almost every great work that has survived, and are responsible for the fate of almost all those which have perished. That the arts did flourish in Italy, even under the most untoward circumstances, as never before, was simply owing to the fact that God sent great artists, who, favoured by climate, beauty in landscape and man, and classic tradition, ran their appointed course in spite of the times. But in Germany nature was less benignant and society still more barbarous. On the south of the Alps art overran the peninsula with a luxuriance not to be checked, spreading on all sides like a wild flower. On the north, the plant, where it lived at all, was hardy and strong, but scanty and even stunted; confined to isolated patches and never expanding to the full measure of its capacity. Here also a peculiar but unenviable characteristic must be taken into

consideration—namely, the claims of the northern schools to an undivided originality. Nothing can be truer than that German art rose from a separate root of its own, with no admixture, as with the Italians, from a classic source. To Italy descended the great heritage of Greek feeling transmitted, it is true, through the almost moribund channel of Byzantine art, and crossed with many a puny native stock. But in that inheritance the German schools had no part; their merits and defects are both strictly their own—a fact which in analysing the art of the great master before us will need to be remembered.[1]

But to return to political conditions. In these respects north and south were more upon a par. If Italy with its contending princes and its distracted people could not, in the modern sense of the word, be called a nation, as little could Germany claim that

[1] The northern schools mixed ill with the Renaissance, *vide* such painters as Mabuse, Bernhard van Orley, and others.

appellation. Both were but conglomerations of inadhesive parts; perennially engaged in the destruction of the weaker by the stronger; preying on each other like animalculæ in a drop of ditch-water; petty dukes and princes intent only on devouring their neighbour; pope and emperor, unless quarrelling together, ready to pounce on victor and victim alike; and the formidable Turk the perpetual terror of all. If the ineffable poetry of Italy could do little to soften this scene, in Germany it was absolutely unmitigated. Even the conventional patronage of superstition and vanity was failing here. The rich headquarters of the Church were far off, and both the ecclesiastical and secular powers were represented by men for whom, even in the sense of luxury and flattery, arts and letters had no attraction. The fortified dwellings of bishops and counts were not the homes of minstrels and sonneteers; nor the strongholds of baronial violence and rapacity the nurseries of schools of art.

The first feeble stirrings of pictorial art

in Germany were the work of men of whom in most instances we know not the names, and, in a few, nothing more than the names. They proceed from localities which in some degree explain their production. Ancient Cologne on the west, the thoroughfare of nations, communicating commercially with the Netherlands and with Venice; and Prague on the east, under the Emperor Charles IV., who summoned an Italian to adorn his castle of Carlstein, and is thus believed to have inoculated native artists—these are the two regions whence the spark appears to have been first struck. An abbey and a convent, here and there, show an altar-piece curious for the connoisseur, but of which nothing is known beyond its obvious relationship to one of these sources.

It is not too much to say that the leading features which characterised the Germany of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may still be recognised in the nation at the present day. It has meanwhile suffered from wars and devastations unexampled in

history for public misery, the scars of which are still discernible; and it has developed a range of power, poetical, philosophical, and scientific, which place it in the highest ranks of intellect; but, in one respect, Germany is unaltered and apparently unalterable. Its 'noblesse' so-called, is less lawless, but it may be doubted whether it be less mischievous or weighs less obstructively on the land than in earlier days. History teaches us that true patriotism is not to be looked for from a *caste* dependent for its importance on the repression of those below them. Such a body, like the Polish noblesse, care only for themselves, never for the interests and liberties of the *people* The German 'Adel' is unfortunately distinguished by two broad marks, incompatible with the conditions of a real aristocracy, and fatal to the harmony and union of a country—viz. infinitesimally divided fortunes, and incalculably multiplied titles. Not comparable with our landed gentry in wealth, consequence, or usefulness, it has yet a jealousy

of contact or commixture with its untitled fellow-citizens which would be thought equally ridiculous and monstrous in an English duke. Indeed, while the laws of our country on the one hand uphold the true dignity and position of the English nobility, the laws of nature, on the other, bind them in the closest ties with the classes below them —classes to which their junior descendants happily revert. Thus the ranks of the great central body of the nation are reinforced, to the infinite good of all, equally from above and from below; a chain of mutual interest running through society in which not a link is missing. The English nobleman who represents a great family cannot separate himself from the commoners of his land if he would; the German noble, every member of whose family, male and female, whether fifty or five hundred in number, assumes the same title, cannot do otherwise. True to their fatal traditions they hold themselves at the same fictitious distance from their fellow burghers, on a rigidly maintained line,

running for ever parallel with them but never meeting; thus leaving a chasm between class and class doubly hurtful to the country; for it is manned with empty arrogance on the one side, and with deadly hatred on the other. That a nation possessing such reasoning powers should not perceive that if a nobility be a desirable class at all, the law of primogeniture is far less a boon to the individual than a safeguard for all, is a question which every Englishman conversant with German life cannot fail to ask himself. To him it is apparent that admitting even the principle of primogeniture, as practised in England, to be unjust—as a benefit to one member of a family at the expense of all the others, which is the favourite Teutonic argument against it—it is an injustice which the Germans practise on a far more serious scale; for theirs is the primogeniture of an entire class at the expense of all their fellow citizens.

It were well too if the feeling excited in the middle classes of Germany by these fictitious distinctions were only that of scorn, for

that is allied to moral nobility: but it is to the example of the noblesse that is traceable that ignoble greed for petty titles which pervades the whole body politic, and which, taking all ranks together, has made of Germany little more, socially speaking, than a magnified *Krähwinckel.* With such influences as these overshadowing a great community, no diffusion of light and warmth from above, no patronage of art and letters worthy the name, is possible. A mob of needy noblesse are seen, especially in Prussia, swarming in court and army, content to bear in most cases the merest fraction of a title rather than none; families without heads, and unfortunately without terminations; usurping the prerogatives of rank without acknowledging its duties; and holding themselves superior to entering the learned professions, much in the same way as the Emperor Sigismund held himself to be '*super grammaticam.*'

With such influences, we repeat, still weighing on the same land, we can somewhat judge of the contempt for the arts of peace,

as well as for the rights of humanity, which prevailed in the ruder times of Germany's most unhappy history. Who can wonder, therefore, that the only two men who ever rose to the level of great artists should have sprung from the sole refuges, comparatively speaking, of law and liberty, which existed in the country, namely, from the free imperial cities —Albert Dürer from Nuremberg, and Holbein from Basle and Augsburg?

We are not inclined to theorise with Herr Thausing[1] that the fact of Nuremberg's position on the map, about midway between Cologne and Prague, was conducive to the rise of its art. The ancient city—whose name chroniclers derive from Nero!—exemplifies in a general way what would occur everywhere with the same causes. It had no water communication of any availability, and no vineyards: but the grant of free rights and privileges by the Emperor Frederic II. at the beginning of the thirteenth century,

[1] *Dürer, Geschichte seines Lebens, und seiner Kunst.* Von M. Thausing, 1876. *Dürer's Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime.* Von Moritz Thausing, 1872.

gradually entailed industry and commerce; these, in their turn, riches; and with riches arose the desire for the enjoyment of such letters and taste as could be had at that time. Of all the free towns in Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Nuremberg was the most important and prosperous. No place ever more strictly illustrated the modern axiom, that labour is the sole source of wealth. With a population numbering at one time about 70,000 souls, it presented a picture of comparative independence and unlimited industry, which contrasted the more strongly with the lawlessness of the knights' castles and the sloth of the episcopal seats. Many were the proverbs to which Nuremberg gave rise—one, at the expense of a neighbouring bishopric, deserves to be recorded: 'Were Nuremberg mine, I would spend her at Bamberg:' the first representing industry and thrift, the second ease and indolence.

While dealing with various forms of commerce, engrossing the carrying trade between East and West, and forming the chief mart

for the products of both, Nuremberg was especially distinguished by a vein of ingenuity and invention peculiar to herself: whence another proverb, 'Nuremberg's hand is in every land.' From this ingenuity there was but a short cut to the rise of art in the only forms within the scope of the homely community. In the total absence of any feeling for refinement in the higher classes of the country, German art owes its origin to the people themselves. Embodied in the simple and comparatively accessible forms of rude woodcuts and engravings, it possessed the advantage of dispensing with patronage. No one was needed to order this class of art; the artist expressed his own ideas within the limit of the religious routine of the day, and trusted securely to the popular demand for a sale. Thus a certain independence ensued, however humble the transactions, better in keeping with the habits of a free, trading community, than the conditions which then existed on the other side of the Alps. Such were the circumstances in Nuremberg when

the great artist, destined to carry these simple forms of art to their highest development, was ushered into the world.

The family of Albert Dürer were Hungarian by birth, though believed to be of German origin. They tended flocks and herds in the neighbourhood of Grosswardein. From this lowly state the grandfather of our master detached himself, and became apprentice to a goldsmith in a little town called Gyula, thus sowing that indirect seed of future art not seldom traceable in the genealogy of great artists. The father, Albert by name, followed in the same craft, and in those 'Wanderjahre,' when the German 'Bursch' passes from town to town, taking alms on the way, he worked for some master goldsmith in the Netherlands, and finally made his way to Nuremberg. He is stated to have arrived there during the open-air festivities attendant upon a marriage in the Pirkheimer family, when the sight of the rich silver vessels, which in Nuremberg then paid no tax, decided him to remain in such a land of

goldsmith promise. At that time, though not for long, Nuremberg formed an exception to other German towns in its exemption from all taxes and close guilds in trade. Not only had the citizens acknowledged labour as the source of all wealth, but they had forestalled another principle of political economy, and kept that labour free. This exemption extended to art as well; and it is said that on one occasion the engravers and woodcutters of Nuremberg could obtain no redress against a fellow-artist, whose participation, he being the hangman of the town, they conceived to be derogatory to the profession; the only answer they obtained being the reminder that the arts were free to all.

'Thus Albert Dürer, the elder, being an able workman, obtained ready employment in the workshop of a master goldsmith, and in the natural course of things married his master's daughter: in his words, 'a pretty, straight, young maiden,' called Barbara. This took place in 1467, she being then fifteen, and he forty. We are assured that he

rose high in the esteem of his fellow-citizens, but that no riches fell to his share, which may be accounted for by the fact that his wife presented him with eighteen children. His portrait, painted by his son in 1489—now in the Uffizi at Florence—shows an earnest, determined countenance, of no beauty or likeness to the young artist; the hands, which hold a rosary, finely drawn.

By this time the descendants of the Hungarian cowherds bore arms, for on the back of this picture are two shields, one showing a golden door ('Thür'), half open, on a red ground; the family, in the long-rooted and superb indifference of the German race to the distinction between certain dentals and labials, being as often called Thürer as Dürer.

Albert Dürer, the hero of this biography, was the third child and second son of this prolific couple. He was born in 1471 in the Pirkheimer House, where his father lodged, opposite the 'Beautiful Fountain'—a fact which may have trained the youthful eye in

those minutiæ of form in which he subsequently delighted. Nowhere, certainly, could he have had greater opportunities for studying those quaint and picturesque architectural forms which render Nuremberg to this day one of the most interesting cities on dry land.

It may be doubted whether the fashion of comparing Nuremberg with Venice—a fashion followed by Herr Thausing—has not been much overstrained. In freedom of commerce, all, high and low, as in Venice, being engaged in trade, the comparison may be just—also in the complicated forms of magisterial election the two cities had much in common. But there is no proof that the Nürembergers had more right to the title of Patrician,[1] which modern German writers claim for them, than they had to that of Doge. In both republics the times came when the people were excluded from participation in the Government, but, for both, these were the times of most show, but of

[1] See *Nuremberg Chronicle*, 1493.

indisputable decline. In Venice, the commencement of her fall dates from the institution of a noblesse on the same system of multiplied titles as in Germany, to the pride and pauperism of whom her decay was chiefly owing.

Yet less than ever, even in that decline, can the able senators and statesmen, the large minds and noble figures of the dwellers on the Adriatic, be compared with the homely, narrow-minded, and, judging from their portraits, singularly ill-favoured citizens of the Franconian town, who put their trust more and more in exclusions, protections, and persecutions, utterly foreign to the liberal spirit, commercial and religious, which to the last reigned in Venice. Indeed, whether one compares the laws, manners, persons, or art of the two communities, one feels conscious of a kind of irony—much as if comparing a thing, not with its likeness, but with its caricature—a caricature not unjustly typified by the names of some of the respective chief families; let us say, for instance, the

Mocenigos and Cornaros of Venice, and the Holzschuher (wooden shoes), and the Holzlöffeln (wooden spoons) of Nuremberg.

To return to the young Albert Dürer. In the same house, a few months earlier, another boy had been born—namely, Willibald Pirkheimer—destined to be through life the friend and associate of the painter. There is no reason, however, to think that in this friendship Pirkheimer condescended, as Herr Thausing argues, from any high estate. Viewed by our present standards both appear to have stood on the same level of social habits and speech, in keeping with the unrefined manners of the day; indeed to speak the truth, the 'patrician' would seem to have been by far the lower of the two.

The boy's first apprenticeship was to his father. And we have his own testimony,[1] in a scanty, and curious youthful journal, that he quickly learned the manipulation of metals. In Italy, as we know, the practice of the

[1] *Dürer's Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime.* Von Moritz Thausing, p. 74.

'aurifex' preceded in some instances that of the highest pictorial art—as with Ghirlandajo and Francia—and though in Germany the goldsmith's art was not of so refined a character, yet the same process took place, and had, as we shall have occasion to point out, a marked influence on style. The lad soon evinced a preference for an artist's career, and, after some opposition from his father on the score of the time already invested in the working of metals, his wish was granted. In the same journal he reports that on November 30, 1486—therefore when he was fifteen—his father bound him apprentice for three years to Michael Wohlgemuth, who lived in Nuremberg. He was already familiar with the use of the pencil, as seen in a portrait of himself taken in a mirror at thirteen years of age. This shows the half-length portrait of an artless boy with long hair, simply and unconventionally treated, of which the volume before us gives a diminished copy. Another drawing of the 'Madonna and Child,' seated under the con-

ventional canopy, and signed 'A. D. 1488,' proves that he was also well acquainted with this class of subject, and already imbued in the treatment of drapery with the mannerism of the day. Herr Thausing calls attention to the fact that the boy lived in a locality of art; that he could not go out or in without passing Wohlgemuth's house, nor visit his own godfather, a rich printer, without seeing impressions from Wohlgemuth's works constantly being rolled off. But there is reason to believe that this picturesque evidence proves too much; the fact of Wohlgemuth's having ever been an engraver, or designer on wood, or more than a very mechanical and mannered painter, being now doubted by most connoisseurs.[1] We entirely agree with Herr Thausing that there is nothing more puzzling than a series of important facts—such as those which led to the eminence of Dürer—of which we know not the foundations and beginning. But in assign-

[1] See *Alberto Durero e sue relazioni coll' arte Italiana e coll' umanismo dell' Epoca.* Da Gustavo Frizzoni. Also *Meister W.* Von Anton Springer.

ing to Wohlgemuth a high position in art he nullifies his own argument, for if Wohlgemuth were the able artist he claims him to have been, there would be no difficulty in accounting for the eminence of his scholar. That the lad did serve him for three years, with other lads whom he reports as very rude companions, is an established fact. Nor can it be doubted that he learned much during that period: for his art, though silent as to its antecedents, is eloquent in proving that no time was lost. But the studios, both north and south of the Alps at that time, were very different to our modern conceptions of such sanctuaries. Wohlgemuth, we are told, was a painter, a carver, an engraver, &c., but it does not follow that he himself excelled in any of these lines. We have only to remember what went on some forty years before in the great Paduan School, founded by Squarcione, to reconcile the various hands and heterogeneous arts that have passed under the name of Wohlgemuth. There was, as is well known, no form of art-

labour, from the grand frescoes in the Eremitani Chapel to the humblest design for altar-cloths and *tarsia*, that Squarcione did not undertake; his name being inscribed on more pictures issuing from his school than any one man could have had time to paint. Squarcione was, in truth, the founder and proprietor of a great factory, with numerous apprentices under him, where commissions for all kinds of ecclesiastical art and furniture were executed. In commercial Nuremberg a workshop of this kind was still less out of character, and it is evident that Wohlgemuth was at the head of such a one, where many hands were taught and employed, though the commissions were of a far humbler kind. Herr Thausing is given to round off his theories with surmises of possible historical or local coincidences, as in the case of the godfather printer; but he gives no critical investigation of the works of Wohlgemuth, and points to no certain standards. It is sufficient for him that Wohlgemuth's name, or even his supposed initial, is attached to

various works, or even that works are his by repute. For instance, in Schedel's 'Neuer Welt Chronik,' a publication with more than two thousand woodcuts, a few of them of great interest—which appeared in Nuremberg 1493, the capital for which was advanced by two 'Patricians,' and the execution undertaken by Wohlgemuth and his stepson—Herr Thausing does not hesitate to assign the best designs to the former. Judging by his physiognomy Wohlgemuth was not the man for poetical or fanciful invention. A drawing of him by Albert Dürer, facsimiled in this volume, shows an eager, ugly, tradesmanlike face, but not that of an artist of thought and nervous energy. But to return to our subject; even if Wohlgemuth were as mediocre in art as he is now believed to have been, it does not affect the benefit the young lad may have derived under him. If the 'Bottega' of Squarcione could produce a Mantegna, Wohlgemuth may be allowed the honour of having reared an Albert Dürer.

Altogether the history of the German engravers is one which modern research has not yet cleared up. Among kindred styles, and various forms of signature, and in the absence of all signature—though that is rare—the field is a very tangled one. The engravers of the time imitated each other, and copied each other, and adapted from each other.[1] Herr Thausing does not hesitate to state that Albert Dürer copied largely from Wohlgemuth, while others are not wanting who assert the reverse. For long the signature 'W' was thought to be identified with the works of Wohlgemuth. This theory was overthrown by the great authority of Bartsch, who believed he had discovered the real Simon Pure in one 'Wenceslaus of Olmutz'—a signature found on an engraving bearing some analogy with those signed 'W.'

[1] For instance, Albert Dürer is proved to have taken a female figure in his 'Great Jealousy' from Mantegna's 'Marine Deities;' reversing it in his plate. Nicoletto da Modena also copied the four witches—italianising them as he went—from Albert Dürer: which he in turn is believed to have taken from the master signing himself 'W.' Instances of such interchange are too numerous to be specified.

This hypothesis has been in its turn discredited. Of the eighty-two engravings signed 'W,' forty-three are copies of acknowledged originals by Martin Schöngauer. These therefore bear the character of Lower Rhenish art. Other plates of ornamental objects—tabernacles, censers, drinking cups, &c.—show Gothic forms which point to Nuremberg; while a few of a higher order, revealing purer proportions, larger forms, knowledge of the nude, and especially a Paduan character, indicate the Italian Renaissance. More than one hand would seem necessary to solve this riddle: and the solution is now believed to be curiously found in a man of double nationality, of two styles, and of two names; a little-known painter, who, as plain Jacob Walsch in Nuremberg, signed with the initial 'W;' and as Jacopo de' Barbari in Venice signed with the Caduceus, being called 'le Maitre du Caducé;' who again, as Jacob Walsch, learnt his art by copying Martin Schöngauer in Colmar, and labouring subsequently in

Nuremberg; and who as Jacopo de' Barbari—no dates being known—partook of the higher forms and mythological subjects prevalent in Venice.[1] Some readers may ask why the name of Walsch should assist the solution, but Italy is known to this day in Germany as Wälschland, and an Italian as 'ein Wälscher,' and 'Jacob called Walsch, a painter,' is mentioned by Albert Dürer and others as identical with Jacopo de' Barbari. In this short history, not yet indisputably admitted, we have a specimen of the difficulty of identifying hands which have left only signs, familiar enough in their day, but long mute to us. It may be added that this disquisition finds place here as connected with Albert Dürer, who is believed in several splendid engravings—the 'Hercules,' the 'Dream,' the 'Amymone'—to have derived the subject from those plates signed 'W' which partake of a Renaissance character.

Continuing his journal with the same

[1] Jacopo de' Barbari is now known to be the author of the grand map of Venice, dated 1500, long assigned to Albert Dürer.

brevity, Albert Dürer thus proceeds: 'And when I had served my time, my father sent me away, and I remained away for four years, when my father ordered me back again. And as I had gone away in the year 1490 after Easter, so I returned in 1494 after Whitsuntide.' Whither the lad first turned his steps, begging doubtless as he went, is not known. True biography, like true history, is a modern science, and the inaccuracy of the early artist biographers has now become proverbial. Sandrart, for instance, sends him to the Netherlands, a statement which the style of his art, and his Netherlandish journal, more than thirty years later, sufficiently contradicts. A contemporary witness, on the other hand,[1] reports him as wandering through Germany and finding his way to Colmar, where he was entertained by three brothers of the then deceased Martin Schöngauer—two, goldsmiths, and one a painter—and subsequently went on to Basle, to a fourth brother, also a

[1] Christoph Scheurl, *Lib. de Laud. Germ.* 1506.

goldsmith. Surmises on the part of Herr Thausing that he repaired from Basle to Strasburg, backed by so strong a coincidence as the occurrence of the Rhine in both places, but which requires a small picture, possibly by him, and once at Strasburg, but now lost, to have had a wrong date—such surmises we may leave. In so excellent a work as this, there was no need for so much conjecture, and in so heavy a one certainly no room. Nor is it well possible to fix the locality of two coloured drawings of a street-scene existing nearly four centuries ago; and as little worth supposing what might have been had the lad travelled fifty years earlier. Which reminds us of the ingenious proposition of a certain lady, thus explaining a family disappointment—'For if the Doctor's mother had only been a boy we should have inherited the estate.' Such hypotheses also take Herr Thausing out of his own depth. Speaking of the beneficial influence on the Italian schools derived from contact with certain Netherlandish painters, he repeats the old

story, now discarded, of Antonello da Messina's visit to Jan van Eyck for the purpose of learning the secret of oil-painting in 1440—a period when Antonello could hardly have been born.[1] He further instances, in defence of his theory, a picture of the Eucharistic Sacrament, painted, or rather perpetrated, by Justus van Ghent at Urbino in 1474, now known to be utterly unworthy of the place it occupies, and of its great Italian contemporaries.[2]

Nor are we inclined to believe with the author that the young lad made his way to Venice at this period. Here and there an early drawing by him may carry a somewhat Italian air, while a couple of drawings in the Albertina at Vienna shows figures in Oriental costumes, not inconsistent with Venetian life. In the round and beautiful character also of some of his children, who are not unworthy

[1] Jan van Eyck died in 1441, and the earliest genuine date on a picture by Antonello da Messina is 1475. He is believed to have died in Venice about 1496, under fifty years of age. See last edition, 1874, of Kugler's *Handbook of Italian Art*, p. 318-20.

[2] *See* p. 146, vol. ii.

to sit or stand on the same altar-steps with the cherubs of Gian Bellini, he departs widely from the starveling type of the early Flemish and German painters. But this is at best but indirect evidence. When Herr Thausing comes to more positive local proof he is singularly unfortunate. Whence Albert Dürer may have taken the three drawings of the shaggy, bewhiskered and bemaned lions' heads facsimiled at p. 99, it is impossible now to say. Certainly not, and especially considering his habit of accuracy, from the close-curled heads of either of the granite 'Leoncini' in the Piazzetta at Venice. Sir Edwin Landseer used to say that the public was so accustomed to see bad lions (in art) that it would not recognise a good one. We may venture to affirm, however, that these drawings, though of no high character, are more like the living animal than any form of sculpture, and are evidently all three taken from different animals.

There can be no doubt that these 'Wanderjahre' greatly contributed to deve-

lop that feeling for landscape which, in the sense of copying real Nature, distinguishes the art of Albert Dürer. In modern phraseology he was 'a sketcher from Nature,' and may be called the first in Germany to whom that appellation can be given. He returned to Nuremberg, as we have seen, towards the end of May 1494, and, resuming the slender journal before quoted, he adds: 'And when I arrived I found Hans Frey agreeing with my father to give me his daughter Agnes to wife; and he gave her to me with 200 florins, and the wedding was held on the 14th July, 1494.'

Herr Thausing says truly, 'among no people is the severance between the two sexes so strictly carried out ("ausgebildet") as among the Germans.' This will be readily endorsed by all who know German life; and certainly in no German city do the ladies appear to have been more completely effaced than in old Nuremberg. If Agnes Dürer's name has been an exception to this rule, it has been so in no desirable light. Morals

have been pointed and tales adorned with the termagant temper and avaricious nature of the beautiful Agnes. Herr Schefer, translated by Mrs. Stothard, has harrowed the souls of his readers with the trials of 'Albert Dürer's married life;' as Ohlenschläger, the Dane, did with those of Correggio's poverty. The one appears to have been as untrue as the other. Correggio is ascertained to have died rich—and Albert Dürer, however distinguished in other respects, certainly earned no title to that apocryphal distinction in Germany —a hen-pecked husband. Poor Agnes seems to have led a quiet humdrum life at his side; cooking his dinner, and curling his hair for aught we know—serving occasionally, or rather her best clothes serving him, for a model, and on one occasion going to the Frankfort fair to sell his prints. But no hint survives in the life of the couple of any departure from the usual German conjugal prose. As to driving her husband to work beyond his strength to provide her with money, it is now shown that, in addition to

the 200 florins he so carefully noted at their marriage, she brought him, at her father's death, a comparatively large sum. Hans Frey had only two children, Agnes Dürer and another daughter, and if at his death Albert Dürer received the smaller half of 1,117 florins in which the paternal fortune consisted, it was simply because he had forestalled part of his wife's share. How far she was able to show generosity during his life may be difficult to say; he had for long considerable family burdens to bear, and was also one of those nervously anxious men who like to appear poorer than they are. But she left no doubt as to her liberality after his death, when she immediately made over to his brothers a sum to which they had no claim until after her decease. A further indication of largeness of spirit is seen in her will, by which she assigns 1,000 florins as an endowment for students in theology at Wittenberg, to the great joy of Melancthon. She survived her husband twelve years, and then descended in peace and honour into his grave, little

dreaming of the equivocal immortality that was subsequently to invest her memory. For more than 135 years elapsed before the slanders levelled against her by her husband's friend took effect. No evidence exists of any animosity between her and the illustrious Pirkheimer. Still, it is quite possible that she may have thought his example as little beneficial to Albert Dürer's morals, as some connoisseurs are inclined to think Wohlgemuth's was for his art. The archives of Nuremberg which have been so hard upon Agnes have not revealed any definite scandal about him. Nevertheless, all the glamour of friendship, the gloss of scholarship, and even the odour of a reforming zeal, do not suffice to render Pirkheimer an attractive historical figure. There is a vulgarity implied in many a record of him which belongs as much to his own soul as to his period. The language of the time was gross enough, but not sufficiently so for his thoughts, for it appears he took refuge in Greek to express sentiments not admissible in his coarse vernacular. But

the chief proof of vulgarity lies in a document indited just before his death—for it is to this alone that the unworthy ideas connected with Agnes's name have been owing. We must tell the story briefly.

After the effects of Albert Dürer had been legally valued—which was not till 1529 (he died in 1528)—Agnes made a sale of such as she deemed superfluous, and among other curiosities she sold a magnificent pair of stag's antlers—possibly immortalised in his engraving of St. Hubert. Now, Pirkheimer had a particular taste for stag's horns, and a large collection of them. When he discovered that Agnes had sold the pair belonging to her husband, he fell into one of those fits of rage to which it appears he was addicted. He was at that time old, fat, bilious, and gouty, with other distempers which did not improve his temper; and in this access of short madness he wrote a letter to a friend at Vienna, begging him to procure a pair of antlers; adding: 'Albert had some horns, and among them a splendid pair I wished to possess, but

she sold them secretly for a mere song, with other fine things.' He then empties all the vials of his wrath upon her, charging her with the death of her husband; 'for she tormented him to an extent that shortened his life; he was dried up like a "Schaub" (bundle of straw), and dared not get any change to cheer him, or go to people'—by 'change' and 'people' meaning his own home and himself. Now it is known that up to a year before his death the master took regular part in the Pirkheimer convivialities, where doubtless no ladies were admitted; and it is possible as he became more suffering that Agnes may have assisted to keep him at home. This the old man states was only a pretext 'to keep him at work in order to get more money to leave her, for she always thought she was going to be starved, as she does still, though Albert has left her 6,000 florins.' The whole letter is full of anger, hatred, and malice, against the world in general, Catholic, Protestant, and female; of which this is a sufficient specimen. At his death, a few

weeks later, this document, or a rough copy of it, remained, and with other MSS. found its way into the city archives. So far Pirkheimer was answerable for the slander; the rest was the work of Sandrart, the historian of German art, who, having disinterred the letter at Nuremberg, published it in his 'Teutsche Academie,' 1675, and not without improving upon it. For he states that the painter, by the advice of his friends, and especially of Pirkheimer, started by stealth for his Netherlandish journey, in order to escape from his virago wife, and to inspire her with some wholesome fear as to his return. The discovery of Albert Dürer's Netherlandish journal, showing that he was accompanied by his wife, neutralised this fable, and for the dispersion of all the rest Herr Thausing has the credit.[1]

[1] Fresh argument was even drawn from Albert Dürer's own letters to Pirkheimer from Venice, where in some rather broad jokes he alludes to a '*Rechenmeisterin*,' or account keeperess, meaning, it was alleged, his own miserly wife. But this is easily refuted, for 'Rechenmeister' proves to be another of the choice patronymics of Nuremberg; and a

The years that Albert Dürer now spent in Nuremberg were those in which he laid the deep foundations of his art. It was a period of intense activity, and has bequeathed to modern connoisseurship more of those questions of authenticity to solve than attend the remains of any other artist. There are the questions both as to those who worked with him, and as to his own work. For it is evident that the young married man began life on his own account; in other words, he started a workshop. Demands for the larger class of works in painting there were but few, and even those—such as altar-pieces—were not looked upon in the same light as in Italy or Belgium. The prices given did not allow of any finish by the master's own hand; he gave the design, and transferred it sometimes himself in black lines to the panel (seen through the paint in cases where pictures have been rubbed); and his apprentices did the

lady of that family—her name according to German usage declined with the feminine termination—was the person alluded to.

mechanical colouring. To this was owing the little repute attached to such works. In Albert Dürer's own words in a letter to a friend, where it was a question of high finish, he says: 'It would be unheard of to bestow such a thing on an altar-piece; who would see it?'

Such being the small value then attached to church pictures, Albert Dürer's brush, when put in requisition at all, was enlisted chiefly for portraits of himself and his friends. Some of those of himself have disappeared, but a sufficient number remain in different galleries—introduced also into his later and larger pictures—for the individuality of the man to be well known. A young man, richly, even fantastically dressed, and with handsome features, is seen in the portraits of 1493 and 1498;[1] and later in that in the Munich Gallery, supposed to be about 1505, though with the kind of expression of one

[1] Herr Thausing is mistaken in thinking that the portrait executed in 1498 is in the Madrid Gallery. A first-rate male portrait is there, by Albert Dürer, but dated 1521, and with no likeness to himself.

looking into a glass. In a preface by a contemporary to the Latin edition of his 'Theory of Proportion,' we have a description of his features and person, in which every beauty incidental to humanity is attributed to him, and with a naïveté which bears a certain impress of truth. For after enumerating the brilliant eyes, Grecian nose, the long throat, broad chest, tall proportions, &c., the writer exclaims—'And nothing could be seen more beautiful than his hand.' There is only one feature passed over in silence, and that a feature so conspicuous with our painter that it would seem as if the same reason had caused the describer's silence which now makes us hesitate to break it. But the truth must be spoken. Those beautiful ringlets! always in curl and in such profusion, which distinguish and even identify every portrait of the man! It is hard to dispel so picturesque an illusion, but where were they when that young lad drew that artless picture of himself at twelve years of age? Hair in abundance is there, it

is true, hanging down on each side of the innocent face, but—as straight as the poker! We leave our readers to their own conclusions!

To return to his art. No man, as we have said, has required more discrimination at the hands of the connoisseur; for no man, Raphael not even excepted, ever had such a posthumous and fraudulent school. It appears that Willibad Imhoff, grandson of Pirkheimer, collected a number of Albert Dürer's drawings, and a few pictures; among which it is believed were some of a genuine kind. His heirs and descendants continued to collect for the purpose of sale, till the collection assumed the dimensions of a commercial depôt. Such specimens as were true soon found purchasers, though without any diminution of the stock in hand, their places being supplied by copies. It is whispered that German tradesmen to this day are not very particular as to the genuineness of the labels which represent Bass's pale ale and other commodities; nor can there be a doubt that the Imhoff family, and other Nuremberg

dealers in the same wares, were perfectly aware of the counterfeit nature of their goods. Certain it is that the collection continued to grow, instead of the reverse; replicas of every picture Dürer had left in his native city being always ready. The monogram was easily copied, but the trade were too shrewd not to see that capital might be made out of a change of date; thus the two youthful portraits of 1493 and 1498 had facsimiles in the Imhoff warehouse, dated 1492 and 1497, so as to make them appear originals of an earlier date. On one occasion the imposture was indirectly revealed, when the Elector Maximilian of Bavaria, a great admirer of Dürer's art, requested that the whole collection might be sent to him for choice, and returned it to the owners without keeping a single specimen. The Elector had more discrimination than an Amsterdam merchant who purchased the whole lot, unseen, for 34,000 thalers.

But though the pictures by our master will always have a charm for those who

appreciate a colourist, in spite of generally exaggerated forms, yet his surpassing excellence lies in a different sphere of art. Albert Dürer is a designer of the highest order and a unique engraver. The forms of woodcutting and engraving lent themselves, as we have said, to the circumstances of the times. They required no capital beyond the thought of the master, and the cunning of his hand, and they were cheap enough to be bought by a large class. As was the custom of the day, Albert Dürer had always a stock of impressions by him, ready for sale and occasionally for presents; and colporteurs or pedlars took them all over Germany, and into other countries. It was for such objects of traffic at fairs, pilgrimages, and church festivities, that some sign or signature, by way of label, was legally required to identify and protect the master. In his earlier years Albert Dürer gave his initials simply in Gothic letters. His well-known monogram

was not adopted till 1497, though he is

known to have added it to works executed before then.

It was on his return from his 'Wanderjahre' that Albert Dürer began his series of large subjects from the Apocalypse. The feelings which led to the struggle of the Reformation—feelings of antipathy for Rome—were already fermenting in minds. The Pope of the time, Alexander VI., had brought the scandals and the tyranny of the Papal throne to a climax. In 1496 fresh edicts had been issued forbidding, under penalty of excommunication, the printing of any book without the sanction of the Bishop of the Diocese. The history of the Reformation shows how widely these laws were evaded, and that of German art still more how openly they were defied. While the Church of Rome in Italy was surrounding itself with the richest forms of Italian art, the homely woodcuts and engravings of Germany were circulating protests against its abuses and exposures of its errors among the great body of the people whom no books reached. To

them these forms of art were strictly 'Libri idiotarum.' Conspicuous among those thus openly sold, was a small engraving under the already noticed signature of 'W.,' and bearing the inscription 'Roma caput mundi;' now a very rare print. In the centre stands a female monster with an ass's head and a tail, one leg terminating in a goat's hoof, the other in a vulture's claw. The left hand outstretched; the other a cat's or tiger's paw. The Tiber and the Castle of St. Angelo complete the scene. The print went by the name of the 'Pabstesel' or Pope's ass. This appeared in Nuremberg in 1496. The young Albert Dürer began to work at his Apocalypse in 1494; and we may safely believe with something of the same aim; for his figure of the Woman seated on the Beast is stated to be the first known study by his hand for any work. The Apocalypse was no new subject in Christian art. As the mysterious triumph of moral right and of the heavenly powers over the evil of this world, it had always offered consolation to the op-

pressed, and at that period of Papal corruption in Germany no more popular theme for the artist's pencil could be chosen. Our master had evidently pondered over the subjects during his four years' absence, and seen much to sharpen their moral. The question has been mooted whether he was the cutter as well as the designer of these blocks. There can, however, be no doubt that whether he cut them or not he knew exactly the powers and limits of the art. Thus only could he have created that revolution in it which his woodcuts inaugurated. Before his time a block-book was a thing of coarse outlines, rudely coloured by hand, and only carried far enough to be so filled up. Dürer's Apocalypse needed no colouring, and did not admit of it. It conveyed in itself a sense of colour and effect far more picturesque than any gaudy illumination could give. His lines never hesitate as to what they mean; and any true eye and practised hand could follow them; and he thus educated the workmen fitted to do his work

justice. This series was a new revelation to the artist world both in style and power. It was entitled to the same epithet 'la maniera moderna,' which was applied to Leo. da Vinci's 'Last Supper,' all but contemporary with it. Nor was the precision of hand more novel than the command over the forms of men, animals, and things. The forms were far from beautiful, nor as yet correct, but they were set in motion as never before by a German engraver. We have only to turn to the Four Riders in the Apocalypse to see a rush of impetuous movement as admirable to this day as it was remarkable then. The peculiar class of subjects, where symbols in description become realities in representation, is the last a modern artist would choose, and as such it remains the only defect in this marvellous series.

It is evident that the general practice of the goldsmith's art exercised a strong influence on all early German schools. The vessels employed in the sacrifice of the Mass, and

the gold and silver heirlooms in old burgher families, had raised a race of workers in metals in whom hand and eye were trained to the utmost decision and accuracy. The transfer of these qualities to wood, copper, or panel, had its advantages—for these are qualities common to all forms of art—but no less its penalties; for they carried also with them the hardness and angularity of the goldsmith's hand into forms for which they were unfitted. No drapery in any known stuff—unless in cartridge paper—could take the rigid folds and breaks in which German Madonnas and saints are enveloped. Even the technical methods of the metal carver cling to the school. The drilled points and holes by which he measures his depths, and round which he models his forms, are recognisable in what is professionally called 'the snap-drapery,' or 'the drapery with eyes,' common to early German art. From these mannerisms Albert Dürer is far from being free—though it is curious to compare the drapery which he copies from common forms of dress, with that in which he

follows prescribed ideas; at the same time no artist that ever lived applied to higher uses those qualities which his early goldsmith training had given him: we cannot study a work by him without perceiving parts which show their evident translation from metallic forms by the facility with which they would translate back again.

In these years—from 1496 to 1504—were doubtless executed many of his single woodcuts representing mythological subjects. It was a period of classic pedantry in Germany, in imitation of the classic revival in Italy. Schools for poets, so called, conducted by men who Latinized their own names, were accordingly founded in various towns for the instruction of young men, who, as Ranke says, lived chiefly on alms and had no books. Such a one arose in Nuremberg under the auspices of Conrad Celtes, who there published his 'Quatuor Libri Amorum,' in 1502, in the illustrations of which Albert Dürer took part.[1]

[1] In his woodcut of 'Philosophy,' with the portraits of eminent men, both of classic and scriptural story around her,

The reader interested in tracing some of the occult meanings in this literature, will find ample speculation upon them in Herr Thausing's work. It would be absurd, however, to think that the artists of the day, whether German or Italian, went deep into these studies. A very little Latin, as with Raphael, sufficed to interpret a classic subject; and though Dürer is said to have read his Vitruvius, yet it is doubtful whether he or the Venetians were so far versed in classic lore as to know the difference between a centaur and a satyr.

Albert Dürer's drawings on wood had, as we have said, created a revolution in the art. Considered merely in the light of fineness of execution, they have been equalled and are equalled at the present day. Some may even aver that woodcutting now achieves triumphs which he dreamt not of, being in some instances scarcely distinguishable from line engraving. But this is rather a tribute to the

may be found a clue to the curious pictures from the Campana Collection in Paris, known to have been copied in the so-called 'Sketchbook' by Raphael.

master than the reverse. He never sought to make one art look like another—he never imitated on wood the effect of copper or steel. But when he exchanged the pencil for the graving tool, he at once attained an excellence which equally goes before all that has followed as all that preceded him. With his first productions in this line Albert Dürer took his place as the greatest engraver the world has known. His 'Adam and Eve,' and his 'St. Hubert' (sometimes called 'St. Eustace'), with horse, dogs, and stag, are believed to be among the earliest specimens of those prodigies of execution in which he stands alone. The wonder to modern artists is that under such incredibly minute finish—carried out in every part alike—the keeping of the composition should not have been sacrificed. The art of the engraver had not then the aids of a preparatory etching which it now receives. In his plate of 'Adam and Eve' only does he seem to have taken an early proof, and this shows a large portion completely finished, and the rest of the plate

bare of all but the tenderest outline. Both these engravings display eye and hand alike marvellous—the one discerning, the other executing, as the French would say, 'jusqu'aux yeux des fourmis.' Every pebble on the earth, every feather on the parrot, every vein in every leaf is there. This power and habit of minute execution may be claimed exclusively by the Northern Schools. In the frame of the circular mirror in the picture by Van Eyck, No. 186, in the National Gallery, are nine minute medallions in which the magnifying glass will discover nine different pictures of the Passion. Albert Dürer rivalled the great Flemish painter in this respect. In the clasp of the bracelet of a female saint of small scale, he has introduced a Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. John. In most of his portraits also, even when small, we find the bars of the window reflected on the iris, and literally every hair given.

We have had an artist among us gifted with the same strength of sight. The late

Daniel Maclise used to say that from one end of Portland Place he could count the wires of a birdcage at the other. The consequence was that this great artist revelled in details which some have thought would have harmonised better with the graver than they did with the brush. At all events in Albert Dürer's hand this detail never palls. It is always art, not labour. No scratch is without meaning; every stroke is form. It was this that gave him the complete mastery over both extremes. For no one can study his works without perceiving his equal command, not only over the boldest possible forms, but over that unerring continuity of line which puts Giotto's supposed 'O' quite out of court. Wherever there is certainty of hand, no matter on what scale, there is freedom. His trees especially are specimens both of his largest and minutest handling;—sometimes indicated with a few master strokes, as free as Titian; oftenest finished with a care which gives the very texture of the bark or wood.

Herr Thausing says truly: 'Never were

the most transparent decision of drawing and the highest finish so united on one and the same plate.' As time went on, this transparent decision only increased. His 'Great Fortune' is as ugly a figure as can be well conceived, but her wings, and the straps and buckles hanging from her left hand, have a depth of colour and a silken brilliancy which mock the simple means with which the effect is produced. These are especially the qualities lavished on his armorial bearings, the most grotesque of his compositions; regarding which one is left in uncertainty whether they are the creations of his own fancy, or the choice emblazonry of Nuremberg 'Patricians.' A scull, for instance, in a shield, transformed into a thing of beauty; a crowing cock as a crest; a boy performing the feat called 'making mill-sails' in a shield; an old woman riding a man who is on all-fours, as a crest; all these are surrounded by scroll-work the very *ne plus ultra* of sparkling effect. Few eyes have so evidently loved the light as Albert Dürer's. His engravings are grada-

tions of greater and lesser brilliancy. His very shadows are but close laid lines with gleams of light bursting between them. Equally grotesque in subject, of kindred beauty of execution, and with a grandeur of wild and fantastic ugliness, is the subject known in various countries—'Lo Stregozzo of Italy, 'Le Carcasse' of France, the 'Ware-wolf' of the North—an old hag riding backwards on a he-goat, her hair streaming to the wind, with little urchins playing tricks below; one, bent double, and looking at the spectator between his own legs.

To give any enumeration of his 106 engravings would be impossible, but it may be said that the best composition, as such, unites with the highest execution in such plates as the 'St. Jerome' and the 'Erasmus.' Each are seen writing; the saint seated at a desk, in the depth of a large room, with comfortable benches and cushions; the windows of circular Venetian panes, throwing their delicate tracery on the shutter-panels; the rafters of the ceiling of that peculiarly brilliant texture

which he gave to all wood. Everything is finished to the utmost; the hour-glass, in a kind of tabernacle in the corner, is a picture in itself; yet all agreeing as harmoniously as, in another sense, the lion, ruminating in front, with the pet dog sleeping, curled up at his side.

The 'Erasmus' has the further merit of being a portrait; and certainly the finest of all those he engraved from life. He is writing at a table, with large parchment folios lying carelessly in front, the quintessence of the picturesque; a jar of flowers before him, with lilies-of-the-valley as distinct in their identity as the learned theologian himself. This is a late work—1527; 'St. Jerome' was executed in 1514. It is impossible to imagine that the hand of man could do more—every quality of art being here expressed in one only—and it may be added that the hand did no more, for this was his last engraving; and the hand was cold a year after.

In turning from the execution of this master to his forms, we turn to a feature which, with his perfect accuracy of eye and

hand, can only be accounted for in two ways. Either there was a strange deficiency of beauty in the human beings around him, or a strange deficiency of taste in himself. For Albert Dürer was often exquisite in his rendering of animals—*vide* his dogs—and always in that of things; he was homely, grotesque, and exaggerated in that of his fellow-creatures. The question must be left open, for even the total ignorance of the canons of the antique, will not account for his favourite type of physiognomy. The highest aim in most forms of art is female beauty; and among the old masters it was the beauty of one who was highest among women. It cannot be doubted that Albert Dürer did his best in the conception of the Madonna; nevertheless she is always a big-headed, double-chinned, most clumsy woman; with no pretensions to the tender youth and grace assigned by feeling and art to the Virgin Mother of the Divine Babe. It is surmised that he did not heartily join in her worship, and at all events he frequently re-

presented her without the nimbus. Even in his finest pictures, such as the Italian 'Trinity' at Vienna, a certain caricature of feature and pose of the head intrudes. This is the more apparent when he attempts a classic figure. In his group of 'Apollo and Diana' there never was such an ill-favoured immortal seen as the goddess! Yet this incapacity for beauty of form did not extend to that portion of the human figure which comes next to the head in difficulty; his hands, namely, are generally exquisite in drawing and expression.

Still, we should be very unworthy critics of this great man, did we not admit the grandeur he occasionally imparts to a physiognomy. In that of our Lord he has bequeathed us the two extremes. In some of the scenes of the Passion his conception is most ignoble; treated as a single head, or as seen on the Sudarium upheld by angels, the expression is almost terrible in its superhuman grandeur.[1] Albert Dürer was both

[1] Albert Dürer created a new type of Christ—partly taken from his own head. His words were: 'Every mother admires

realist and idealist, and never were the two characters more widely apart in the same man. In the first he only gives what he sees, however low and grotesque his model. In the second he revels in the mysterious depths of a grand power of conception, as in two instances we shall mention presently.

Perhaps there is no higher tribute to our master than a comparison between his woodcuts and Marc Antonio's copies of them. The slight admixture of Italian feeling given to the homely German forms sits ill upon them. In diminishing the grotesqueness of some heads the Italian engraver has lost all their character. In most copies something of vitality must be sacrificed, but in these the sacrifice is that of life itself, for Albert Dürer's plates are alive, Marc Antonio's copies dead. Especially do we see this in the beautiful composition of SS. Anna and Joachim embracing at the gate of Jerusalem, which is one of the finest in the series of the Madonna's life.

her own child, and accordingly many painters render what is like themselves.'

We now come to a third quality of art—that of thought—in which he may be said to be no less extraordinary than in that of execution. In the regular cycle of often repeated religious subjects, however distinct he may be in telling the tale, he gives but few original conceptions. These are, however, of the highest order. In no subject of Christian art has the real meaning been so buried beneath strange misapprehensions as in that of the Agony in the Garden. Our Lord is usually but a tame accessory in a composition where three huge sleeping figures and a theatrical angel engross the space and attention. Albert Dürer in two versions of the subject has given *the Agony* itself. In the one, Christ is prostrate on the ground; in the other the arms are flung aloft as in the antique gesture of despair. Both Bartsch and Herr Thausing strangely misinterpret this action as a protest against the Cross the angel is holding before him. But his finest expression of spiritual and dramatic power appears in that mysterious subject, called

the 'Man of Sorrows,' heading his 'Little Passion'—a subject which in the soulless routine of religious art has been more repeated and more degraded than any other. Our Lord, almost nude, as from the Cross, is here seen seated on a stone, bowed down with grief, his elbow on his knee, his hand half covering the face, the crown of thorns on his brow. In this embodiment of the Crucified yet living Saviour, Albert Dürer stands unrivalled. No other artist has so solved that paradox peculiar to the Christian faith—the Man of Sorrows, yet the Lord of all. No one has made the sorrow and shame so touching, yet the Deity so triumphant. Had the master left nothing else, this would have sufficed to characterise him as an artist of the intensest devotional feeling.

Again, when he takes a subject which lies outside the repertory of Church art, such as the Prodigal Son—of which he has left both drawing and engraving—we see his power over those deeper touches of nature which redeem the lowest accessories. The

scene is a homely farmyard; the Prodigal, supposed to be his own portrait, kneels in devoutest penitence beside a trough, over which huge pigs are contending for their food; one of them with a peculiar expression of his wicked little eye, levelled at his improvident human companion.

But it is in a form of mysterious conception, too definite for the sublime, but peculiarly provocative to imagination and curiosity, that the special character of Albert Dürer's art is found. There never was a subject so distinctly given and yet so unintelligible as that of the 'Melancolia.' Herr Thausing's solution of the 'Four Temperaments,' of which this is one, gives a title, but nothing more. There are plenty of instances where a forgotten tale or passage in history has been the origin of a surviving picture. The 'Calumny of Apelles,' so favourite a subject with the mediæval painters, including Albert Dürer, might have furnished cause for speculation had Lucian's description not survived. Still, the scene gives an intelligible incident.

We see a judge enthroned, a suppliant, accusers, &c., we feel that it is a translation from one language into another, and we translate it back again. But in the 'Melancholy' we gain no clue. A magnificent female figure is sitting in an attitude of deepest meditation; but why she should be winged, why the cherub at her side should be seated on a milestone, why a starved wolf-hound should be at her feet, why the globe, the polygon, the plane, the saw, the hammer, &c., should lie around her, and the meteor and the bat appear in the background, all this has been hitherto asked in vain. Mr. Stopford Brooke, in two fine sermons, has gone far in moral and spiritual interpretation. It is the Book of Ecclesiastes: 'In much wisdom is much grief.' We can endorse this solution as far as it goes. But this idea is general and vague, the picture itself is definite and particular. That it should be so, and yet so unreadable—so unreadable and yet so interesting—is the real point in question.

The other plate, called the 'Knight,

Death, and the Demon,' is also declared to be another of the 'Four Temperaments,' for which again we are not the wiser. It is the figure of a stern man in armour, riding immovably on, with two frightful apparitions beside and behind him. Still, it is not difficult to believe that the lonely and rocky defile typifies the passage of this life, the monsters the temptations that beset it, and the horseman the Christian soldier. Indeed, the plate in the master's time was called the 'Reformation's Knight,' a name in keeping with the feelings of the time. The monster with the hour-glass is evidently a 'Memento mori'—the other an image of fleshly temptation, for it is the same that appears to the sleeper in the 'Dream.' But to our view the knight does not see his ghastly attendants, but is pursuing his way straight on, firm in faith, and in the sense of the Divine protection. Herr Thausing's idea that his 'laughing muscles' are strongly agitated as he derides the wiles of the enemy is singularly farfetched. The original en-

graving represents a hard-set face, with no expression but that of an iron determination.

We return now to Albert Dürer's life. In 1505 he undertook a journey to Venice, impelled thither, some say, by an outbreak of the plague at Nuremberg, but according to Vasari, by the piracy committed by Marc Antonio in facsimiling his 'Little Passion,' as already alluded to. Vasari's further statement that the Signory so far admitted his claim to protection as to forbid the Italian to adopt the monogram, is not confirmed by our author's researches, who found no record of such a suit in the Venetian archives of the period. At the same time it is a significant fact, that while the copies of the 'Little Passion' have the monogram upon them, those of the 'Life of the Madonna,' subsequently executed, show only the empty tablet. But the principal motive that took him to Venice was a commission from the German Guild in Venice to execute a picture for the Church of S. Bartolommeo, attached to the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, then in progress of rebuilding

after the fire. His letters to Pirkheimer, which have been preserved, are curiosities, and in some respects painful ones. Money, dress, of which he was notedly fond, and the coarsest of jokes, are the principal topics; while, as to local observation on his part, Venice might have stood on dry land, and not contained a building worthy of remark. There is no reason, however, to doubt that he reported truly of the society around him; for he gives his countrymen quite as bad a character for roguery as he deals to some Italians. Of others he speaks as one craves to believe true in that time of Venetian glories: 'There are so many excellent fellows ("Gesellen") among the Italians, that it does one's heart good—such sensible scholars, good musicians, connoisseurs in painting, and people of noble sentiments; and they show me much respect and friendship.' He evidently felt that the atmosphere of Venice had raised him in the scale of society. 'I am become a *gentiluomo* in Venice,' he says. And again: 'Here I am

a *gentiluomo*, at home a *Schmarotzer*,' or hanger-on. At the same time he reports great jealousy on the part of the artists, who steal ideas from him, and yet criticise him as not classic, and make him pay a fee to their 'Scuola;' adding a dark hint that he is advised not to eat and drink with them; all of which may, perhaps, be explained by the circumstance that he took with him a stock of his own wares to sell, in the shape of woodcuts and engravings, and also six small pictures. But Gian Bellini showed him much kindness 'before others,' and ordered a picture of him. 'He is very old,' he adds—(then eighty)—'but still the best in painting.' No other painter's name is mentioned by him.

Of the picture executed for S. Bartolommeo he says: 'I have silenced all the painters, who said that I was well enough as an engraver, but did not know how to manage colours. Now, every one says they never saw better colouring.' There is no doubt that this was no flattery. The picture, which is at Prague, though reduced to a deplorable

condition, still shows signs of fine colour and of beautiful composition. It represents the 'Feast of the Rosary'—the Child crowning the kneeling Pope, Julius II., on the one side, the Madonna, the kneeling Emperor, Maximilian, on the other. On each side stand the chief members of the German Guild, being crowned by *amorini*. The painter and his friend Pirkheimer stand behind. The improving atmosphere of Venice is so far evident in this work that it partakes less of his caricatured forms than any other, while the angel playing the lute at the foot of the throne is Bellinesque all over. In September 1506, he announces his intention 'to ride to Bologna, in order to learn the art of perspective, which some one there will teach me.' This departure from Venice elicits the first sympathetic word: 'Oh! how cold I shall be, after so much sun!'

The subject of Albert Dürer's oil pictures is too large to go into. We have preferred to dwell on that department of art in which he stands alone. Fuseli says, in words more

true to himself than to his subject, 'the forms of Albert Dürer are blasphemies upon Nature; the thwarted growth of starveling labour and dry sterility, formed to inherit his hell of a Paradise. To extend the asperity of this verdict beyond his forms would be equally unjust and ungrateful to the Father of German art, on whom invention often flashed, whom melancholy marked for her own.' There is a root of truth in this exaggerated sentence. The general ugliness of his forms is the more betrayed when clothed in his frequently beautiful colour, which is the reason why his oil pictures will always be unpopular with the general public. Drawing and colouring are not homogeneous. But no one with real feeling for art has ever looked at the noble figures of the 'Four Evangelists'—life-size, at Munich—(again four of Herr Thausing's 'Temperaments!') without confessing that colour, drawing, expression, and drapery, are all magnificent together. These were the crowning efforts of his brush, being executed in 1526. On

the other hand, no minutia in his engravings can exceed that given to a small picture of the 'Crucifixion,' now at Dresden, where in the open mouth of the Saviour the teeth, and even the tongue, are seen. One hopes that this was the small picture executed for Gian Bellini.

It is surmised that the teacher of perspective alluded to at Bologna may have been no other than the well-known monk, Fra Luca Pacioli, who is believed to have instructed Leonardo da Vinci—thus adding another tie to the analogy which may be traced between the two great masters. It is not only in the physical conditions of strong sight, and patience and precision of hand, that they may be likened; their characters, up to a certain point, tended in the same direction. Each sought to elucidate the deeper principles of form—Dürer in his 'Proportions Lehre,' as Leonardo in his 'Trattato della Pittura.' Each revelled in caricature—Dürer's being the vulgarer vein, Leonardo's the most monstrous. Each

busied himself with plans of fortifications which were adopted in their respective countries. Each loved music, wrote poetry, and were men of general culture. Fortunately the German artist esteemed the practice of art still higher than its theory, and was as exceptionally productive as Leonardo was the reverse.

There is no record of what the Italian master thought of his German brother, but the opinion of one as great as Leonardo, and still more opposite in feeling to Albert Dürer, has been preserved. In a conversation between Michael Angelo and Vittoria Colonna, recorded by a contemporary,[1] the grand old Florentine criticises the detail of Albert Dürer ; remarking that in giving such finish to so many things in the same composition, no single one is made sufficiently prominent. There never were two men who represented wider antipodes in art, and were therefore apparently less able to appreciate

[1] *Manuscrit de François de Hollande.* A. Raczinski, *Les Arts en Portugal*, Paris, 1846, p. 14, 15.

each other—the one in his exquisite minutia, embracing all detail—the other, in his grand abstraction, embracing none. When Michael Angelo adds, that though Dürer was a man of skill and refinement, yet that no work by him, even if executed in Italy, could possibly pass for Italian, no one will contradict him. But it is not the less true that, though he might never be mistaken for an Italian, yet Italians were happy to steal from him. The works of Andrea del Sarto, and of Pontormo, show many a theft of this kind; to say nothing of the great Raphael himself, whose well-known imitation of him in the 'Spasimo di S. Sicilia'—now at Madrid—is more or less borrowed in every figure, as well as in that of the fallen Lord, from the engraving in the 'Great Passion;' and borrowed even to disadvantage; for the Academic figure of the big soldier who heads the procession, which is the defect in Dürer's composition, is still more glaringly so in Raphael's. According to Lod. Dolce, Raphael hung his studio round with Dürer's drawings, while Marc

Antonio's copies were executed under the great master's supervision.

We have no space to go into one of the most important of the master's works—namely, the 'Triumphs of Maximilian'—a long series of designs, which, as we now know, were intended to be executed the size of life, and suspended on each side of the principal street through which the Emperor passed. The subjects were chosen by Stabius, in the triple character of Astronomer, Mathematician, and Poet to Maximilian's Court, and were exemplified in a medley of History, Legend, Allegory, Christianity, and Vanity. Many hands were here employed, but that of Dürer is especially recognisable in the magnificent drawing of a triumphal car drawn by four galloping horses, on which the Emperor is seated with all his family. This work, and the 'Border to Maximilian's Prayer-book,' executed in inks of different colour, and expressing every fancy that a man so deeply versed in natural objects could extemporise, brought the painter

ultimately to the notice of Maximilian, who sat to him for a portrait. This occasion gave rise to one of the only living anecdotes of the genial spendthrift whom the people called the 'Last of the Knights' that had been preserved. For the Emperor, in the attempt to draw something himself, found the chalk perpetually break in his hand, while Dürer had no such interruption. On which Maximilian asked Albert Dürer how it came that his chalk did not break; and the painter answered, smiling: 'Most gracious Emperor, I should be sorry your Majesty were so skilled in this respect as I.' The drawing of the Emperor, of which this work gives a facsimile, shows the pronounced jaw and underlip, which was retained in the very different physiognomy of his gloomy grandson.

Albert Dürer does not appear to have quitted his home again until he undertook his well-known Netherlandish journey, which lasted a year, July 1520–21. The object of this trip was to compass an audience with the newly-elected young Emperor, Charles V.,

from whom he hoped to obtain the ratification of a pension Maximilian had promised him. Of this journey Albert Dürer left a copious journal. It is curious to read the progress of a great artist at that time—passing from town to town, on the Rhine, in Flanders and Holland—feasted, entertained, and loaded with gifts as he went. At Antwerp, especially, the master came into the greatest commercial mart of the day, abounding in show, pomp, art, and learning, and in all the products of the East. Times had changed since he was in Venice, and artists were now only anxious to show him honour. This they did by an entertainment, in which he describes himself as treated 'like a prince;' the whole company standing up as he was conducted to his seat; and then, after a late carousal, all escorting him and Agnes, to the number of sixty, with torches, back to their own quarters. But the most remarkable feature in the journal is the constant shower of presents perpetually passing between his new acquaintances and himself. It is not,

perhaps, to be expected that this natura greed for 'gifts' will ever die out in the human breast, but at that time the extent to which it existed in the rich Netherlands represented a form of exchange of which gifts were the current coin. For it was an understood thing that such courtesies were not only to be reciprocal, but also to their full market-value. For this purpose as well as for sale, the master had taken with him a large stock of his printed works. Even the hereafter-greatly-to-be-slandered-Agnes claimed her commission on her husband's pictures. In a letter to Jacob Heller for whom he had painted a picture, Albert Dürer coolly writes, 'My wife begs for a Trinkgeld.' Nor was she neglected in this trip; for while Dürer received numberless cases of wine, yards of velvet, gold rings, cocoa-nuts, sugar-cane, &c., she had her share of the same, or equivalents—the wine always excepted. At the same time the master never omitted to set down the computed value of all they received as well as gave. For instance:

Thomas of Bologna,' then in Antwerp, came to me and presented me with a gold ring, antique, with a good intaglio, worth five florins. I gave him in return as many of my best printed works as are worth six florins.' Nor was his hand idle, for many are the chalk portraits he took; sometimes in return for entertainments, sometimes for money. 'I portrayed an English nobleman, who gave me a florin.' And not seldom the florin went to his wife. The love of detail exemplified in his works seems to have extended to other particulars. In this journal every present, fee, or Trinkgeld, every dinner he ate, every noble he exchanged, and every pfenning or stiver he spent is scrupulously set down; not in the form of an account, of which he seems to have been quite incapable, but as a narrative. Occasionally we find a florin or a few stivers lost or won at play, which gives a glimpse of his social habits. Compared with these constantly recurring entries, his notices of artists are but scanty. 'Meister Quentin' (Matsys) is the first mentioned—but only

that he had been in his house in Antwerp, not a word more. About Joachim Patenier, a painter of minute landscapes, he is more communicative. He takes his portrait, and calls him 'a good landscape painter,' which Herr Thausing believes to be the first time that the now common epithet occurs. With Lucas van Leyden, the Dutch engraver, he also becomes acquainted—'a little man,' of whom he drew a portrait. Also with Master Gerard (Horebont) the illuminist; and with Master Bernard (Van Orley), both in the service of the Princess Regent Margaret, aunt to Charles V., at Brussels; and Van Orley gave him a splendid dinner, which he thinks could not be paid for with ten florins; and he portrayed him in return. And he was admitted to the Princess, and gave her copies of all his works, and two drawings on parchment, which cost him great pains, and which he estimates at thirty florins—the Princess, in return, promising to intercede for him with the Emperor.

At Aix-la-Chapelle he witnessed the

coronation of Charles; but he dismisses the ceremony with a line, as never having seen anything more splendid.

But there came an occasion when the master forgets all buying and selling and taking of gifts, and turns into the recesses of his own heart. This was when a report reached Antwerp that Luther had been treacherously taken and imprisoned. 'That pious man! a confessor of true Christian faith! enlightened by the Holy Spirit! And is he still alive? or have they murdered him in the cause of Christian truth, and because he lashed that most unchristian Papacy, which extinguished the freedom of the Gospel under the heavy weight of man's laws?' And then he pours out his heart in ardent prayer that Christ may call His scattered sheep home—'those who are still in the Roman church,—together with Indians, Muscovites, Russians, and Greeks.' And he appeals to Erasmus of Rotterdam, whom he had lately seen and portrayed, as the 'Knight of Christ,' that he should lead the van in

defence of the truth, and earn—what Erasmus was never disposed to do—the martyr's crown. 'Thou art already a little old man; and I have heard thee say that thou only gavest thyself two years more of life in which to work. . . . Oh, Erasmus! join thyself to us, that God may glorify thee, as it was written of David; for thou canst accomplish it—thou canst slay the Goliah.' Seldom have pious utterances been put into more homely language—deep and true—but grotesque, like his works.

An earthly monarch now claimed him, for the King of Denmark commanded his presence at Brussels, where the Emperor and the Princess Regent gave the King a great banquet. And then the King entertained those two personages and the Queen of Spain at another great feast, to which the master was invited; and he portrayed the King in oil, who gave him thirty florins. This was a proper finale to his wanderings. From Brussels he started back for Nuremberg—the journal concluding at Cologne; and

thus summed up his doings: 'With all I earned, and spent, and bought in the Netherlands, and with all my transactions with high and low, I had only loss. And for all I did for the Princess Margaret, and for what I gave her, she gave me nothing in return.'

Here we must leave a subject only too copious for our space. We have endeavoured to give the great artist under the threefold aspect of his time, his life, and his works—all doubtless faithful exponents of each other. He bore the stamp of those peculiarities of his age which we now fail to comprehend or respect—but the man was gold 'for a' that.' Through all his career we perceive a figure, industrious, conscientious, and upright; with an earnest reverence for religion which speaks still, through his pencil, to many a heart. As to Art, it has been given to few men to develop so many of her finer features; for, with one exception which those versed in his works will readily guess, he possessed all her qualities; while, as to individual worth, we may believe the

words of Melancthon and conclude with them: He was a wise man, in whom the gift of Art, great as it might be, was yet the least he possessed.' Albert Dürer died in Nuremberg, April 6, 1528.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay
on 12 April, 2019